

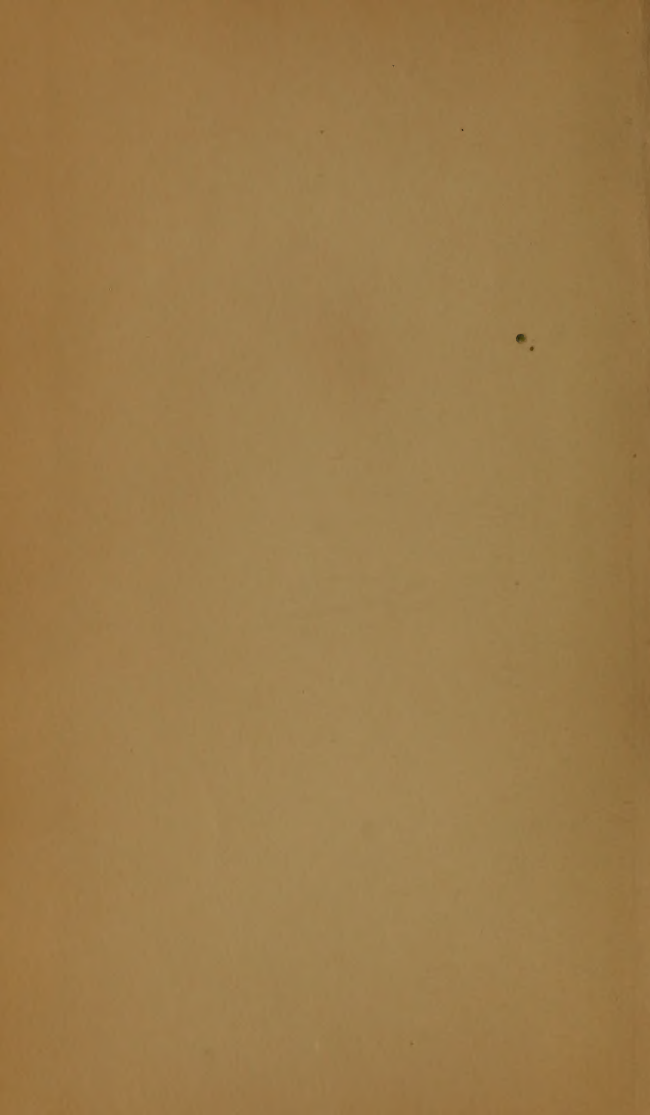


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THE

DRAMATIC

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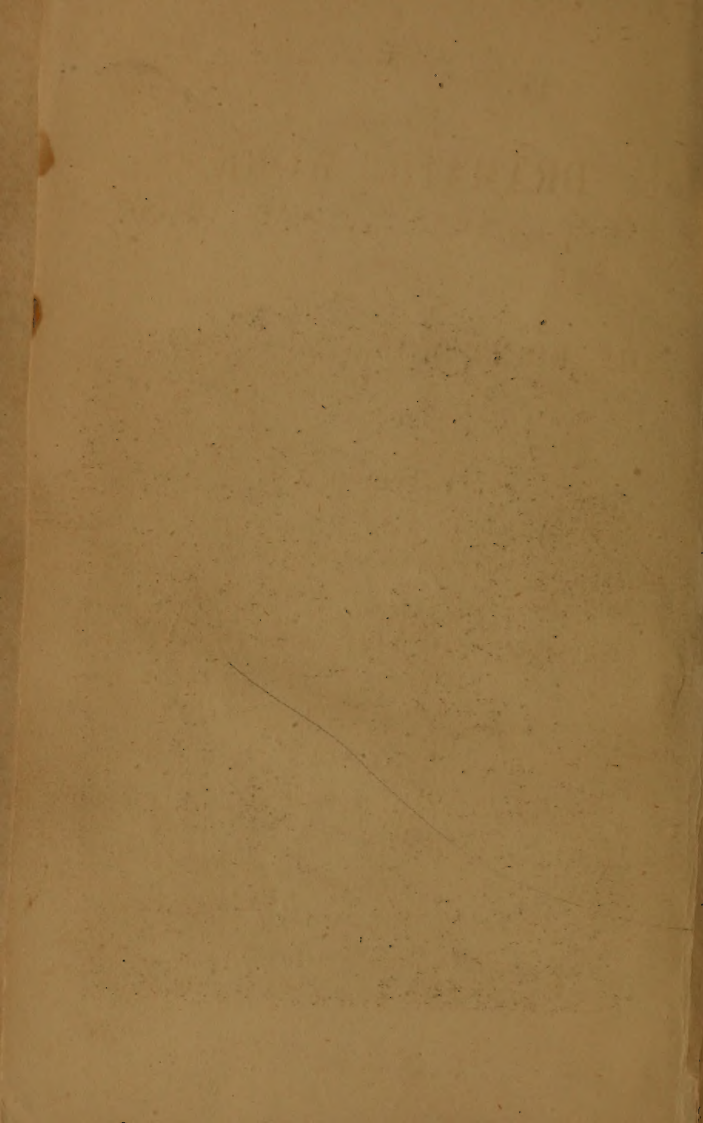
OF

EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON.



Know him, Madam!—Ah, I begin to fear it
is you who know him not!

Lady of Lyons.



THE

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DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

Edward George Earle

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON

COMPRISING

THE DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE

RICHELIEU

MONEY

THE LADY OF LYONS

NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM

A New Edition

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE

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Gift

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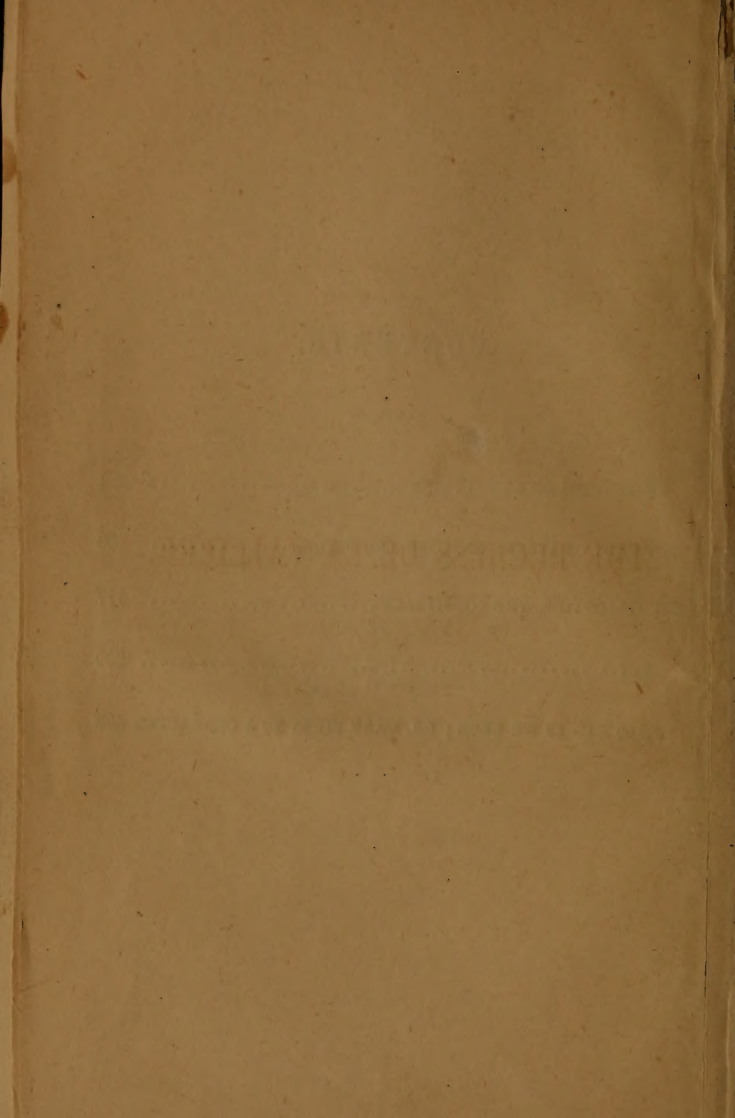
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THE DUCHESS DE LA VALLIERE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

THE DUKE DE LAUZUN,
COUNT DE GRAMMONT,
MARQUIS DE MONTESPAN,

} *Courtiers.*

THE MARQUIS DE BRAGELONE, *betrothed to Mademoiselle
de la Vallière.*

BERTRAND, *the Armourer.*

Courtiers, Gentlemen of the Chamber, Priests, &c.

MADAME DE LA VALLIÈRE.

MADemoisELLE (afterwards Duchess) DE LA VALLIÈRE.

MADAME DE MONTESPAN.

ABBESS.

Nuns, Ladies, Maids of Honour, &c.

PROLOGUE.

To paint the Past, yet in the Past portray
Such shapes as seem dim prophets of To-day ;—
To trace, through all the garish streams of art,
Nature's deep fountain—woman's silent heart ;—
On the stirr'd surface of the soften'd mind
To leave the print of holier truths behind ;—
And, while through joy or grief—through calm or strife,
Bound the wild Passions on the course of Life,
To share the race—yet point the proper goal,
And make the Affections preachers to the Soul ;—
Such is the aim with which a gaudier age
Now woos the brief revival of the stage ;—
Such is the moral, though unseen it flows,
In Lauzun's wiles and soft La Vallière's woes ;
Such the design our Author boldly drew,
And, losing boldness, now submits to YOU.

Not new to climes where dreamy FABLE dwells—
That magic Prospero of the Isle of Spells—
Now first the wanderer treads, with anxious fear,
The fairy land whose flowers allured him here.
Dread is the court our alien pleads before ;
Your verdict makes his exile from the shore.
Yet, ev'n if banish'd, let him think, in pride,
He trod the path with no unhallow'd guide ;
Chasing the light, whose face, though veil'd and dim,
Perchance a meteor, seem'd a star to him,
Hoping the ray might rest where TRUTH appears
Beneath her native well—your smiles and tears.

When a wide waste, to Law itself unknown,
 Lay that fair world the DRAMA calls its own ;
 When all might riot on the mines of Thought,
 And Genius starved amidst the wealth it wrought ;
 He who now ventures on the haunted soil
 For nobler labourers won the rights of toil,
 And his the boast—that Fame now rests in ease
 Beneath the shade of her own laurel-trees.
 Yes, if with all the critic on their brow,
 His clients once have grown his judges now,
 And watch, like spirits on the Elysian side,
 Their brother ferried o'er the Stygian tide,
 To where, on souls untried, austere sit
 (The triple Minos)—Gallery—Boxes—Pit—
 'Twill soothe to think, howe'er the verdict end,
 In every rival he hath served a friend.

But well we know, and, knowing, we rejoice,
 The mightiest Critic is the PUBLIC VOICE.
 Awed, yet resign'd, our novice trusts in you,
 Hard to the practised, gentle to the new.
 Whate'er the anxious strife of hope and fear,
 He asks no favour—let the stage be clear.
 If from the life his shapes the poet draws,
 In man's deep breast lie all the critic's laws :
 If not, in vain the nicely-poised design,
 Vain the cold music of the labour'd line,
 Before our eyes, behold the living rules ;—
 The soul has instincts wiser than the schools !
 Yours is the Great Tribunal of the Heart,
 And touch'd Emotion makes the test of Art.
 Judges august !—the same in every age,
 While Passions weave the sorcery of the Stage,—
 While Nature's sympathies are Art's best laws,—
 To you a stranger has referr'd his cause :—
 If the soft tale he woos the soul to hear
 Bequeaths the moral, while it claims the tear,
 Each gentler thought to faults in others shown
 He calls in court—a pleader for his own !

THE DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

Time, sunset. On the foreground an old Chateau; beyond, Vineyards and Woods, which present, through their openings, Views of a River, reflecting the sunset. At a distance, the turrets of the Convent of the Carmelites.

MADAME and MADEMOISELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Mdlle. de la Vall. 'Tis our last eve, my mother !

Mme. de la Vall. Thou regrett'st it,

My own Louise ! albeit the court invites thee—

A court beside whose glories, dull and dim

The pomp of Eastern kings, by poets told ;

A court——

Mdlle. de la Vall. In which I shall not see my
mother !

Nor these old walls, in which, from every stone,

Childhood speaks eloquent of happy years ;

Nor vines and woods, which bade me love the earth,

Nor yonder spires, which raised that love to God !—

[*The vesper bell tolls.*

The vesper bell !—my mother, when, once more,

I hear from those grey towers that holy chime,
 May thy child's heart be still as full of Heaven,
 And callous to all thoughts of earth, save those
 Which mirror Eden in the face of Home !

Mme. de la Vall. Do I not know thy soul ?—through
 every snare

My gentle dove shall 'scape with spotless plumes.
 Alone in courts, I have no fear for *thee* :—
 Some natures take from Innocence the lore
 Experience teaches ; and their delicate leaves,
 Like the soft plant, shut out all wrong, and shrink
 From vice by instinct, as the wise by knowledge :
 And such is thine ! *My* voice thou wilt not hear,
 But Thought shall whisper where my voice would warn,
 And Conscience be thy mother and thy guide !

Mlle. de la Vall. Oh, may I merit all thy care, and
 most

Thy present trust !—Thou'lt write to me, my mother,
 And tell me of thyself : amidst the court
 My childhood's images shall rise. Be kind
 To the poor cotters in the wood ;—alas !
 They'll miss me in the winter !—and my birds ?—
 Thy hand will feed them ?—

Mme. de la Vall. And that noble heart
 That loves thee as my daughter should be loved—
 The gallant Bragelone ?*—should I hear
 Some tidings Fame forgets—if in the din
 Of camps I learn thy image makes his solace,
 Shall I not write of *him* ?—

* The author has, throughout this play, availed himself of the poetical license to give to the name of Bragelone the Italian pronunciation, and to accent the final *e*.

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*with indifference*]. His name will breathe

Of home and friendship ;—yes !—

Mme. de la Vall. Of nought beside ?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Nay, why so pressing ?—let me change the theme.

The king !—you have seen him ;—is he, as they say,
So fair—so stately ?

Mme. de la Vall. Ay, in truth, my daughter,
A king that wins the awe he might command.
Splendid in peace, and terrible in war ;
Wise in the council—gentle in the bower.

Mdlle. de la Vall. Strange, that so often through mine
early dreams

A royal vision fitted ;—a proud form,
Upon whose brow nature had written “ empire ;”
While, on the lip,—love, smiling, wrapp’d in sunshine
The charmèd world that was its worshipper—
A form like that which clothed the gods of old,
Lured from Olympus by some mortal maid,—
Youthful it seemed—but with ambrosial youth ;
And beautiful—but half as beauty were
A garb too earthly for a thing divine :—
Was it not strange, my mother ?

Mme. de la Vall. A child’s fancy,
Breathed into life by thy brave father’s soul.
He taught thee, in thy cradle yet, to lisp
Thy sovereign’s name in prayer—and still together,
In thy first infant creed, were link’d the lessons
“ TO HONOUR GOD AND LOVE THE KING ;” it was
A part of that old knightly faith of France
Which made it half religion to be loyal.

Mdlle. de la Vall. It might be so. I have preserved the lesson,

Ev'n with too weak a reverence.—Yet, 'tis strange !
A dream so oft renew'd !—

Mme. de la Vall. Here comes thy lover !
Thou wilt not blame him if his lips repeat
The question mine have ask'd ? Alphonso, welcome !



SCENE II.

BRAGELONE, MADAME *and* MADEMOISELLE DE LA
VALLIÈRE.

Brage. My own Louise !—ah ! dare I call thee so ?
War never seem'd so welcome ! since we part,
Since the soft sunshine of thy smiles must fade
From these dear scenes, it soothes, at least to think
I shall not linger on the haunted spot,
And feel, forlorn amidst the gloom of absence,
How dark is all once lighted by thine eyes.

[*MME. DE LA VALLIÈRE retires into the château.*]

Mdlle. de la Vall. Can friendship flatter thus ?—or
wouldst thou train

My ear betimes to learn the courtier's speech ?

Brage. Louise ! Louise ! this is our parting hour :
Me war demands—and thee the court allures.
In such an hour, the old romance allow'd
The maid to soften from her coy reserve,
And her true knight, from some kind words, to take
Hope's talisman to battle !—Dear Louise !
Say, canst thou love me ?—

Mdlle. de la Vall. Sir !—I !—love !—methinks
It is a word that——

Brage. Sounds upon thy lips
Like “land” upon the mariner’s, and speaks
Of home and rest after a stormy sea.
Sweet girl, my youth has pass’d in camps ; and war
Hath somewhat scathed my manhood ere my time.
Our years are scarce well-mated : the soft spring
Is thine, and o’er my summer’s waning noon
Grave autumn creeps. Thou say’st “I flatter !”—well
Love taught me first the golden words in which
The honest heart still coins its massive ore.
But fairer words, from falser lips, will soon
Make *my* plain courtship rude. Louise ! thy sire
Betroth’d us in thy childhood : I have watch’d thee
Bud into virgin May, and in thy youth
Have seem’d to hoard my own !—I think of *thee*,
And I am youthful still ! The passionate prayer—
The wild idolatry—the purple light
Bathing the cold earth from a Hebe’s urn ;—
Yea, all the soul’s divine excess which youth
Claims as its own, came back when first I loved thee !
And yet so well I love, that if thy heart
Recoil from mine,—if but one single wish,
A shade more timid than the fear which ever
Blends trembling twilight with the starry hope
Of maiden dreams, would start thee from our union,—
Speak, and my suit is tongueless !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Oh, my lord !
If to believe all France’s chivalry
Boasts not a nobler champion,—if to feel
Proud in your friendship, honour’d in your trust,—

If this be love, and I have known no other,
Why then——

Brage. Why then, thou lov'st me !

Mdlle. de la Vall. [aside]. Shall I say it ?

I feel 'twere to deceive him ! Is it love ?

Love, no, it is *not* love !—*[Aloud.]* My noble lord,

As yet I know not all mine own weak heart ;

I would not pain thee, yet would not betray.

Legend and song have often painted love,

And my heart whispers not the love which should be

The answer to thine own :—thou hadst best forget me !

Brage. Forget !

Mdlle. de la Vall. I am not worthy of thee !

Brage. Hold !—

My soul is less heroic than I deem'd it.

Perchance my passion asks too much from thine

And would forestall the fruit ere yet the blossom

Blushes from out the coy and maiden leaves.

No ! let *me* love ; and say, perchance the time

May come when *thou* wilt bid me *not* forget thee.

Absence may plead my cause ; it hath some magic ;

I fear not contrast with the courtier-herd ;

And thou art not Louise if thou art won

By a smooth outside and a honey'd tongue,

No ! when thou seest these hunters after power,

These shadows, minion'd to the royal sun,—

Proud to the humble, servile to the great,—

Perchance thou'lt learn how much one honest heart,

That never wrong'd a friend or shunn'd a foe,—

How much the old hereditary knighthood,

Faithful to God, to glory, and to love,

Outweighs a universe of cringing courtiers !

Louise, I ask no more !—I bide my time !

Re-enter MME. DE LA VALLIÈRE from the château.

Mme. de la Vall. The twilight darkens. Art thou,
now, Alphonso,

Convinced her heart is such as thou wouldst have it ?

Brage. It is a heavenly tablet—but my name

Good angels have not writ there !

Mme. de la Vall.

Nay, as yet,

Love wears the mask of friendship : she must love thee.

Brage. [*half incredulously*]. Think'st thou so ?

Mme. de la Vall.

Ay, be sure !

Brage.

I'll think so too.

[*Turns to MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE.*

Bright lady of my heart !—[*Aside.*] By Heaven ! 'tis true !

The rose grows richer on her cheek, like hues

That in the silence of the virgin dawn,

Predict, in blushes, light that glads the earth.

Her mother spoke aright ;—ah, yes, she loves me !

Bright lady of my heart, farewell ! and yet

Again—farewell !

Mdlle. de la Vall.

Honour and health be with
you !

Mme. de la Vall. Nay, my Louise, when warriors wend
to battle,

The maid they serve grows half a warrior too ;

And does not blush to bind on mailed bosoms

The banner of her colours.

Brage.

Dare I ask it ?

Mdlle. de la Vall. A soldier's child could never blush,
my lord,

To belt so brave a breast ;—and yet,—well, wear it.

[*Placing her scarf round BRAGELONE'S hauberk.*

Brage. Ah . add for thy sake.

Mdlle. de la Vall. For the sake of one
Who honours worth, and ne'er since Bayard fell,
Have banners flaunted o'er a knight more true
To France and Fame ;—

Brage. And love ?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Nay, hush, my lord ;
I said not that.

Brage. But France and Fame shall say it !
Yes, if thou hear'st men speak of Bragelone,
If proudest chiefs confess he bore him bravely,
Come life, come death, his glory shall be thine,
And all the light it borrow'd from thine eyes,
Shall gild thy name. Ah ! scorn not *then* to say,
“He loved me well !” How well ! God shield and bless
thee ! [Exit BRAGELONE.]

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*aside*]. Most worthy love ! *why* can
I love him not ?

Mme. de la Vall. Peace to his gallant heart ! when next
we meet,

May I have gain'd a son—and thou—

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*quickly*]. My mother,
This night let every thought be given to *thee* !
Beautiful scene, farewell !—farewell, my home !
And thou, grey convent, whose inspiring chime
Measures the hours with prayer, that morn and eve
Life may ascend the ladder of the angels,
And climb to heaven ! serene retreats, farewell !
And now, my mother !—no ! some hours must yet
Pass ere our parting.

Mme. de la Vall. Cheer thee, my Louise !
And let us now within ; the dews are falling—

Mlle. de la Vall. And I forgot how ill thy frame
may bear them.

Pardon!—within, within!—

[*Stopping short and gazing fondly on* MME. DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Your hand, dear mother?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

An old Armoury, of the heavy French Architecture preceding the time of Francis the First, in the Castle of BRAGELONE. BERTRAND, the armourer, employed in polishing a sword.

Bert. There now? I think this blade will scarcely
shame

My gallant master's hand; it was the weapon,
So legends say, with which the old Lord Rodolph
Slew, by the postern gate, his lady's leman!
Oh, we're a haughty race—we old French lords;
Our honour is unruined as our steel,
And, when provoked, as ruthless!

Enter BRAGELONE.

Brage.

Ah, old Bertrand!

Why, your brave spirit, 'mid these coats of mail,
Grows young again. So! this, then, is the sword
You'd have me wear. God wot! a tranchant blade,
Not of the modern fashion.

Bert.

My good lord,

Yourself are scarcely of the modern fashion.
They tell me, that to serve one's king for nothing,
To deem one's country worthier than one's self,

To hold one's honour not a phrase to swear by.—

They tell me, now, all *this* is out of fashion.

Come, take the sword, my lord!—you have your father's

Stout arm and lordly heart: they're out of fashion,

And yet you keep the one—come, take the other.

Brage. Why you turn satirist!

Ber. Satirist! what is that?

Brage. Satirists, my friend, are men who speak the truth
That courts may say—they do not know the fashion!

Satire on Vice is Wit's revenge on fools

That slander Virtue. How now! look ye, Bertrand!

Methinks there is a notch here.

Ber. Ay, my lord;

I would not grind it out;—'twas here the blade

Clove through the helmet, ev'n unto the chin,

Of that irreverent and most scoundrel Dutchman

Who stabb'd you, through your hauberk-joints—what
time

You placed your breast before the king.

Brage. Hence, ever

Be it believed, that, in his hour of need,

A king's sole safeguard are his subjects' hearts!

Ha, ha! good sword! that was a famous stroke!

Thou didst brave deeds that day, thou quaint old servant,

Though now—thou'rt not the fashion.

Ber. Bless that look,

And that glad laugh! they bring me back the day

When first old Bertrand arm'd you for the wars,—

A fair-faced stripling; yet, beshrew my heart,

You spurr'd that field before the bearded chins,

And saved the gallant Lord La Vallière's standard,

And yet you were a stripling then.

Brage. La Vallière !

The very name goes dancing through my veins.
Bertrand, look round the armoury. Is there nought
I wore that first campaign ? Nay, nay ! no matter,
I wear the *name within* me. Hark ye, Bertrand !
We're not so young as then we were : when next
We meet, old friend, we both will end our labours,
And find some nook, amidst yon antique trophies,
Wherein to hang this idle mail.

Ber. Huzza !

The village dames speak truth—my Lord will marry !
And I shall nurse, in these old wither'd arms,
Another boy—for France another hero.
Ha, ha ! I am so happy.

Brage. Good old man !

Why this is like my father's hall—since thus
My father's servants love me.

Ber. All must love you !

Brage. All !—let me think so. [*Bugle sounds.*

Hark, the impatient bugle !

I hear the neigh of my exultant charger,
Breathing from far the glorious air of war.
Give me the sword !

Enter Servant, with a letter.

Her mother's hand !—" Louise,
Arrived at court, writes sadly, and amidst
The splendour pines for home,"—I knew she would !
My own Louise !—" Speaks much of the king's good-
ness ;"—

Goodness to her !—that thought shall give the king
A tenfold better soldier !—" From thy friend,
Who trusts ere long to hail thee as her son."

Her son !—a blessed name. These lines shall be
My heart's true shield and ward away each weapon.
He who shall wed Louise has conquer'd Fate,
And smiles at earthly foes !—Again the bugle !
Give me your hand, old man. My fiery youth
Went not to battle with so blithe a soul
As now burns in me. So ! she pines for home—
I knew she would—I knew it ! Farewell, Bertrand !

[*Exit* BRAGELONE.]

Ber. Oh ! there'll be merry doings in the hall
When my dear lord returns ! A merry wedding,
And then—and then—oh, such a merry christening !
How well I fancy his grave manly face
Brightening upon his first-born.

[*As he is going.*]

Re-enter BRAGELONE.

Brage. Ho, there ! Bertrand !

One charge I had forgot :—Be sure they train
The woodbine richly round the western wing—
My mother's old apartment. Well, man ! well !
Do you not hear me ?

Ber. You, my lord ! the woodbine ?

Brage. Yes ; see it duly done. I know she loves it ;
It clammers round her lattice. I would not
Have one thing absent she could miss.

Remember !

[*Exit* BRAGELONE.]

Ber. And this is he whom warriors call “the Stern !”
The dove's heart beats beneath that lion breast.
Pray Heaven his lady may deserve him ! Oh,
What news for my good dame !—i' faith, I'm glad
I was the first to learn the secret. So,

This year a wife—next year a boy ! I'll teach
 The young rogue how his father clove the Dutchman
 Down to the chin ! Ha, ha ! old Bertrand now
 Will be of use again on winter nights,—
 I know he'll be the picture of his father.

[*Exit* BERTRAND.

SCENE IV.

An Antechamber in the Palace of Fontainebleau.

Enter LAUZUN and GRAMMONT at opposite doors.

Lau. Ah, Count, good day ! Were you at court last night ?

Gram. Yes ; and the court has grown the richer by
 A young new beauty.

Lau. So !—her name ?

Gram. La Vallière.

Lau. Ay, I have heard ;—a maid of honour ?

Gram. Yes.

The women say she's plain.

Lau. The women ! oh,

The case it is that's plain—*she* must be lovely.

Gram. The dear, kind gossips of the court declare

The pretty novice hath conceived a fancy—

A wild, romantic, innocent, strange fancy—

For our young king ; a girlish love, like that

Told of in fairy tales : she saw his picture,

Sigh'd to the canvas, murmur'd to the colours,

And—fell in love with carmine and gambouge.

Lau. The simple dreamer ! Well, she saw the king ?

Gram. And while she saw him, like a rose, when May
Breathes o'er its bending bloom, she seem'd to shrink
Into her modest self, and a low sigh
Shook blushes (sweetest rose-leaves !) from her beauty.

Lau. You paint it well.

Gram. And ever since that hour
She bears the smiling malice of her comrades
With an unconscious and an easy sweetness ;
As if alike *her* virtue and *his* greatness
Made love impossible : so, down the stream
Of purest thought, her heart glides on to danger.

Lau. Did Louis note her ?—Has he heard the gossip ?

Gram. Neither, methinks : his Majesty is cold.
The art of pomp, and not the art of love,
Tutors his skill—Augustus more than Ovid.

Lau. The time will come. The king as yet is young,
Flush'd with the novelty of sway, and fired
With the great dream of cutting Dutchmen's throats :
A tiresome dream—the poets call it "Glory,"

Gram. So much the better,—'tis one rival less ;
The handsome king would prove a dangerous suitor.

Lau. Oh, hang the danger ! He must have a mistress ;
'Tis an essential to a court : how many
Favours, one scarcely likes to ask a king,
One flatters from a king's inamorata !
We courtiers fatten on the royal vices ;
And, while the king lives chaste, he cheats, he robs *me*
Of ninety-nine per cent. !

Gram. Ha, ha ! Well, duke,
We meet again to-night. You join the revels ?
Till then, adieu.

Lau. Adieu, dear count.

[*Exit* GRAMMONT.

The king

Must have a mistress : I must lead that mistress.
The times are changed !—'twas by the sword and spear
Our fathers bought ambition—vulgar butchers !
But now our wit's our spear—intrigue our armour ;
The antechamber is our field of battle ;
And the best hero is—the cleverest rogue ?

[*Exit* LAUZUN.

SCENE V.

Night—the Gardens of the Fontainebleau, brilliantly illuminated with coloured lamps—Fountains, vases, and statues in perspective—A pavilion in the background—to the right the Palace of the Fontainebleau, illuminated. Enter Courtiers, Ladies, &c.*

A Dance.

Enter LOUIS *followed by* Courtiers, &c.

Louis. Fair eve and pleasant revels to you all !
Ah, Duke !—a word with you.

[*Courtiers give way.*

Thou hast seen, my Lauzun,
The new and fairest floweret of our court,
This youngest of the graces—sweet La Vallière,
Blushing beneath the world's admiring eyes ?

Lau. [*Aside*]. (So, so !—he's caught !) Your Majesty
speaks warmly ;
Your praise is just—and grateful—

* The effect of the scene should be principally made by jets-d'eau, waterfalls, &c.

Louis.

Grateful ?

Lau.

Ay.

Know you not, Sire, it is the jest, among
 The pretty prattlers of the royal chamber,
 That this young Dian of the woods has found
 Endymion in a king,—a summer dream,
 Bright, but with vestal fancies !—scarcely love,
 But that wild interval of hopes and fears
 Through which the child glides, trembling, to the woman ?

Louis. Blest thought ! Oh, what a picture of delight
 Your words have painted !—

Lau.

While we speak, behold,
 Through yonder alleys, with her sister planets,
 Your moonlight beauty gleams.

Louis.

'Tis she !—this shade
 Shall hide us !—quick—

[*Enters one of the bosquets.*]*Lau.* [*following him*].

I trust my creditors
 Will grow the merrier from this night's adventure.

Enter MDLLE. DE LA VALLIERE and Maids of Honour.

First Maid. How handsome looks the Duke de Guiche
 to-night !

Second Maid. Well, to my taste, the graceful Gram-
 mont bears

The bell from all !—

Third Maid.

But, then, that charming Lauzun
 Has so much wit.

First Maid.

And which, of all these gallants,
 May please the fair La Vallière most ?

Mdlle. de la Vall.

In truth,

I scarcely mark'd them ; when the king is by,
 Who can have eye, or ear, or thought for others ?

First Maid. You raise your fancies high !

Second Maid. And raise them vainly !

The king disdains all love !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Who spoke of love ?

The sunflower, gazing on the Lord of heaven,

Asks but its sun to shine !—Who spoke of love ?

And who would wish the bright and lofty Louis

To stoop from glory ? Love should not confound

So great a spirit with the herd of men.

Who spoke of love ?——

First Maid. My country friend, you talk

Extremely well ; but some young lord will teach you

To think of Louis less, and more of love.

Mdlle. de la Vall. Nay, ev'n the very presence of his
greatness

Exalts the heart from each more low temptation.

He seems to walk the earth as if to raise

And purify our wandering thoughts, by fixing

Thought on himself ;—and she who thinks on Louis

Shuts out the world, and scorns the name of love !

First Maid. Wait till you're tried— [Music.

But, hark ! the music chides us

For wasting this most heavenly night so idly.

Come ! let us join the dancers.

[*Exeunt Maids.*

[*As LA VALLIÈRE follows, the King steals from the bosquet,
and takes her hand, while LAUZUN retires in the opposite
direction.*

Louis. Sweet La Vallière !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Ah !—

Louis. Nay, fair lady, fly not, ere we welcome
Her who gives night its beauty !

Mdlle. de la Vall.

Sire, permit me !

My comrades wait me.

Louis.

What ! my loveliest subject

So soon a rebel ? Silent !—Well, be mute,

And teach the world the eloquence of blushes.

Mdlle. de la Vall. I may not listen—

Louis.

What if *I* had set

Thyself the example ? What if *I* had listen'd,

Veil'd by yon friendly boughs, and dared to dream

That one blest word which spoke of Louis absent

Might charm his presence, and make Nature music ?

Mdlle. de la Vall. You did not, Sire ! you could not !

Louis.

Could not hear thee,

Nor pine for these divine, unwitness'd moments,

To pray thee, dearest lady, to divorce

No more the thought of love from him who loves thee,

And—faithful still to glory—swears thy heart

Unfolds the fairest world a king can conquer !

Hear me, Louise !

Mdlle. de la Vall. No, Sire ; forget those words !

I am not what their foolish meaning spoke me,

But a poor simple girl, who loves her king,

And honour *more*. Forget, and do not scorn me !

[*Exit MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE.*]

Louis. Her modest coyness fires me more than all

Her half-unconscious and most virgin love.

Enter Courtiers, Ladies, Guests, &c. ; LAUZUN,

GRAMMONT, and MONTESPAN.

Well, would the dancers pause awhile ?

Lau.

Ev'n pleasure

Wearies at last.

Louis. We've but to change its aspect,
And it resumes its freshness. Ere the banquet
Calls us, my friends, we have prepared a game
To shame the lottery of this life, wherein
Each prize is neighbour'd by a thousand blanks.
Methinks it is the duty of a monarch
To set the balance right, and bid the wheel
Shower nought but prizes on the hearts he loves.
What ho, there ! with a merry music, raise
Fortune, to show how Merit conquers Honours !

[*Music.*

[*The Pavilion at the back of the stage opens, and discovers the Temple of Fortune superbly illuminated. Fortune ; at her feet, a wheel of light ; at either hand, a golden vase, over each of which presides a figure—the one representing Merit, the other Honour.*

Louis. Approach, fair dames and gallants ! Aye, as now,
May Fortune smile upon the friends of Louis !

[*The Courtiers and Ladies group around the vases. From the one over which Merit presides they draw lots, and receive in return from Honour various gifts of jewels, &c.*

Enter MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE at the back of the stage.

Louis [to *Mdlle. de la Vall.*]. Nay, if you smile not on
me, then the scene
Hath lost its charm.

Mdlle. de la Vall. Oh, Sire, all eyes are on us !

Louis. All eyes *should* learn where homage should be
render'd.

Mdlle. de la Vall. I pray you, Sire——

Lau. Will't please your Majesty
To try your fortune ?

Louis. Fortune ! Sweet La Vallière,
I only seek my fortune in thine eyes.

[*Music.* LOUIS draws, and receives a diamond bracelet.
Ladies crowd round.

First Lady. How beautiful !

Second Lady. Each gem were worth a duchy !

Third Lady. Oh, happy she upon whose arm the king
Will bind the priceless band !

Louis [*approaching Mdlle. de la Vall.*]. Permit me, lady.
[*Clasps the bracelet.*

Lau. Well done—well play'd ! In that droll game
call'd Woman,

Diamonds are always trumps for hearts.

First Lady. Her hair's
Too light !

Second Lady. Her walk is so provincial !

Third Lady. D'ye think she paints ?

Lau. Ha, ha ! What envious eyes,
What fawning smiles, await the king's new mistress !



ACT II.—SCENE I.

The Gardens of the Fontainebleau.

Enter BRAGELONE.

Brage. Why did we suffer her to seek the court ?
It is a soil in which the reptile Slander
Still coils in slime around the fairest flower.
Can it be true ?—Strange rumours pierced my tent

Coupling her name with—pah!—how foul the thought is!—

The maid the king loves!—Fie! I'll not believe it!

I left the camp—sped hither: if she's lost,

Why then!—down—down, base heart! wouldst thou suspect her?

Thou—who shouldst be her shelter from suspicion?

But I may warn, advise, protect, and save her—

Save—'tis a fearful word!

Enter LAUZUN.

Lau. Lord Bragelone!

Methought your warrior spirit never breathed

The air of palaces! No evil tidings,

I trust, from Dunkirk?

Brage. No. The *fleur-de-lis*

Rears her white crest unstain'd. Mine own affairs

Call me to court.

Lau. Affairs! I hate the word;

It sounds like debts.

Brage. [Aside]. This courtier may instruct me.

[Aloud.] Our king—he bears him well?

Lau. Oh, bravely, Marquis;

Engaged with this new palace of Versailles.

It costs some forty millions!

Brage. Ay, the People

Groan at the burthen.

Lau. People!—what's the *People*?

I never heard that word at court! The *People*!

Brage. I doubt not, duke. The People, like the
Air,

Is rarely heard, save when it speaks in thunder.

I pray you grace for that old-fashion'd phrase.

What is the latest news?

Lau. His Majesty

Dines half an hour before his usual time.

That's the last news at court!—it makes sensation!

Brage. Is there no weightier news? I heard at Dunkirk
How the king loved a——loved a certain maiden—
The brave La Vallière's daughter.

Lau. How, my lord,

How can you vegetate in such a place?

I fancy the next tidings heard at Dunkirk

Will be that—Adam's dead!

Brage. The news is old, then?

Lau. News! *news*, indeed! Why, by this time, our
lackeys

Have worn the gossip threadbare. News!—

Brage. The lady

(She is a soldier's child) hath not yet barter'd
Her birthright for ambition? She rejects him?
Speak!—She rejects him?

Lau. Humph!

Brage. Oh, duke, I know

This courtier air—this most significant silence—

With which your delicate race are wont to lie

Away all virtue! Shame upon your manhood!

Speak out, and say Louise La Vallière lives

To prove to courts—that woman *can* be honest!

Lau. Marquis, you're warm.

Brage. You dare not speak;—I knew it!

Lau. Dare not?

Brage. Oh, yes, you dare, with hints and smiles

To darken fame—to ruin the defenceless—

Blight with a gesture—wither with a sneer !
Did I say “dare not ?”—No man dares it better !

Lau. My lord, these words must pass not !

Brage. Duke, forgive me !

I am a rough, stern soldier—taught from youth
To brave offence, and by the sword alone
Maintain the license of my speech. Oh, say—
Say but one word !—say this poor maid is sinless,
And, for her father’s sake—(*her father loved me !*)
I’ll kneel to thee for pardon !

Lau. Good, my lord,

I know not your interest in this matter :
’Tis said that Louis loves the fair La Vallière ;
But what of that ?—good taste is not a crime !
’Tis said La Vallière does not hate the king ;
But what of that ?—it does but prove her—loyal !
I know no more. I trust you’re satisfied ;
If not——

Brage. Thou liest !

Lau. Nay, then, draw !

[*They fight—after a few passes, LAUZUN is disarmed.*]

Brage. There, take

Thy sword. Alas ! each slanderer wears a weapon
No honest arm can baffle—*this* is edgeless.

[*Exit BRAGELONE.*]

Lau. Pleasant ! This comes, now, of one’s condescending
To talk with men who cannot understand
The tone of good society. Poor fellow !

[*Exit LAUZUN.*]

SCENE II.

Enter MADEMOISELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Mdlle. de la Vall. He loves me, then ! He loves me !
Love ! wild word !

Did I say love ? Dishonour, shame, and crime
Dwell on the thought ! And yet—and yet—*he loves me !*

[*Re-enter* BRAGELONE, *at the back of the stage.*—*She takes out the King's picture.*

Mine early dreams were prophets !—Steps ! The king ?

Brage. No, lady ; pardon me ;—a joint mistake ;
You sought the king—and *I* Louise la Vallière !

Mdlle. de la Vall. You here, my lord !—you here !

Brage. There was a maiden
Fairer than many fair ; but sweet and humble,
And good and spotless, through the vale of life
She walk'd, her modest path with blessings strew'd
(For all men bless'd her) ; from her crystal name,
Like the breath i' the mirror, even envy pass'd :
I sought that maiden at the court ; none knew her.
May I ask you—where now Louise la Vallière ?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Cruel !—unjust ! You were my father's friend,

Dare you speak thus to me ?

Brage. Dare ! dare !—'Tis well.

You have learnt your state betimes !—

Mdlle. de la Vall.

My state, my lord !

I know not by what right you thus assume
The privilege of insult !

Brage. Ay, reproach !

The harlot's trick—for shame ! Oh, no, your pardon !
You are too high for shame : and so—farewell !

Mdlle. de la Vall. My lord !—my lord, in pity—

No !—*in justice,*

Leave me not thus !

Brage. Louise !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Have they belied me ?

Speak, my good lord !—What crime have I committed ?

Brage. No crime—at courts ! 'Tis only Heaven and
Honour

That deem it aught but—most admired good fortune !

Many, who swept in careless pride before

The shrinking, spotless, timorous La Vallière,

Will now fawn round thee, and with bended knees

Implore sweet favour of the king's kind mistress.

Ha, ha !—this is not crime ! Who calls it crime ?

Do prudes say "Crime?" Go, bribe them, and they'll
swear

Its name is greatness. Crime, indeed !—ha, ha !

Mdlle. de la Vall. My heart finds words at length !—

'Tis false !

Brage. 'Tis false !

Why, speak again ! Say once more it is false—

'Tis false !—again, 'tis false !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Alas, I'm wretched !

Brage. No, lady, no ! not wretched, if not guilty !

[*MADemoiselle de la Vallière after walking to and fro
in great agitation, seats herself on one of the benches of
the garden, and covers her face with her hands.*]

Brage. [*Aside*]. Are these the tokens of remorse? No matter!

I loved her well! And love is pride, not love,
If it forsake ev'n guilt amidst its sorrows!
[*Aloud.*] Louise! Louise!—Speak to thy friend, Louise!
Thy father's friend!—thine own!

Mdlle. de la Vall. This hated court!

Why came I hither? Wherefore have I closed
My heart against its own most pleading dictates?
Why clung to virtue, if the brand of vice
Sear my good name?

Brage. That, when thou pray'st to Heaven,
Thy soul may ask for *comfort*—not *forgiveness*!

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*rising eagerly*]. A blessed thought!
I thank thee!

Brage. Thou art innocent!

Thou hast denied the king?

Mdlle. de la Vall. I have denied him.

Brage. Curst be the lies that wrong'd thee!—doubly
curst

The hard, the icy selfishness of soul,
That, but to pander to an hour's caprice,
Blasted that flower of life—fair fame! Accurst
The king who casts his purple o'er his vices!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Hold!—thou malign'st thy king!

Brage. He spared not thee.

Mdlle. de la Vall. The king—Heaven bless him!

Brage. Wouldst thou madden me?

Thou!—No—thou lov'st him not?—thou hid'st thy face!
Woman, thou tremblest! Lord of Hosts, for this
Hast thou preserved me from the foeman's sword,
And through the incarnadined and raging seas

Of war upheld me ?—made both life and soul
The sleepless priests to that fair idol—Honour ?
Was it for this ? I loved thee not, Louise,
As gallants love ! Thou wert this life's IDEAL,
Breathing through earth the Lovely and the Holy,
And clothing Poetry in human beauty !
When in this gloomy world they spoke of sin,
I thought of thee, and smiled—for thou wert sinless !
And when they told of some diviner act
That made our nature noble, my heart whisper'd—
“So would have done Louise !”—’Twas thus I loved thee !
To lose thee, I can bear it ; but to lose,
With thee, all hope, all confidence, of virtue—
This—*this* is hard !—Oh ! I am sick of earth !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Nay, speak not thus ;—be gentle with
me. Come,

I am not what thou deem'st me, Bragelone ;
Woman I am, and weak. Support, advise me !
Forget the lover, but be still the friend.
Do not desert me—*thou* !

Brage. Thou lov'st the king !

Mdlle. de la Vall. But I can fly from love.

Brage. Poor child ! And whither ?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Take me to the old castle, to my
mother.

Brage. The king can reach thee there !

Mdlle. de la Vall. He'll not attempt it.

Alas ! in courts, how quickly men forget !

Brage. Not till their victim hath surrender'd all !
Hadst thou but yielded, why thou might'st have lived
Beside his very threshold, safe, unheeded ;
But thus, with all thy bloom of heart unrifled,—

The fortress storm'd, not conquer'd,—why man's pride,
 If not man's lust, would shut thee from escape !
 Art thou in earnest,—wouldst thou truly fly
 From gorgeous infamy to tranquil honour,
 God's house alone may shelter thee !

Mdlle. de la Vall.

The convent !

Alas ! alas ! to meet those eyes no more !

Never to hear that voice !

Brage. [*departing*]. Enough.

Mdlle. de la Vall.

Yet, stay !

I'll see him once ! one last farewell—and then—

Yes, to the convent !

Brage.

I have done !—and yet,

Ere I depart, take back the scarf thou gav'st me.

Then didst “thou honour worth !” now, gift and giver

Alike are worthless.

Mdlle. de la Vall. Worthless ! Didst thou hear
 me ?

Have I not said that—

Brage.

Thou wouldst see the king !

Vice first, and virtue after ! O'er the marge

Of the abyss thou tremblest. One step more,

And from all heaven the Angels shall cry “*Lost !*”

Thou ask'st that single step ! Wouldst thou be saved ?

Lose not a moment.—Come !

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*in great agony*]. Beside that tree,

When stars shone soft, he vow'd for aye to love me !

Brage. Think of thy mother ! At this very hour

She blesses Heaven that thou wert born—the last

Fair scion of a proud and stainless race.

To-morrow, and thy shame may cast a shade

Over a hundred 'scutcheons, and thy mother

Feel thou wert born that *she* might long to die !
Come !

Mdlle. de la Vall. I am ready—take my hand.

[*Her eye falls on the bracelet.*

Away !

This is his gift ! And shall I leave him thus ?
Not one kind word to break the shock of parting—

Brage. And break a mother's heart !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Be still ! Thou'rt man !

Thou canst not feel as woman feels !—her weakness
Thou canst not sound. O Louis, Heaven protect thee !
May fate look on thee with La Vallière's eyes !
Now I am ready, sir. Thou'st seen how weak
Woman is ever where she loves. *Now*, learn,
Proportion'd to that weakness is the strength
With which she conquers love ! O Louis, Louis !
Quick ! take me hence !—

Brage. The heart she wrongs hath saved her !
And is that all !—The shelter for mine age—
The Hope that was the garner for Affection—
The fair and lovely tree, beneath whose shade
The wearied soldier thought to rest at last,
And watch life's sun go calm and cloudless down,
Smiling the day to sleep—all, all lie shatter'd !
No matter. I have saved thy soul from sorrow,
Whose hideous depth thy vision cannot fathom.
Joy !—I have saved thee !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Ah ! when last we parted
I told thee, of thy love I was not worthy.
Another shall replace me !

Brage. [*smiling sadly*]. Hush ! Another !
No !—See, I wear thy colours still ! Though Hope

Wanes from the plate, the dial still remains,
 And takes no light from stars ! I—I am nothing !
 But thou—Nay, weep not ! Yet these tears are honest :
 Thou hast not lived to make the Past one blot,
 Which life in vain would weep away ! Poor maiden !
 I could not cheer thee *then*. *Now*, joy !—I've saved thee !

[*Exeunt* MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE and BRAGELONE.

SCENE III.

The King's Cabinet at Fontainebleau ; the King seated at a table,
 covered with papers, &c., writing.*

Enter LAUZUN.

Louis. Lauzun, I sent for you. Your zeal has served me,
 And I am grateful. There, this order gives you
 The lands and lordship of De Vesci.

Lau. Sire,

How shall I thank your goodness ?

Louis. Hush !—by silence !

Lau. [*aside*]. A king's forbidden fruit has pretty wind-
 falls !

Louis. This beautiful Louise ! I never loved
 Till now.

Lau. She yields not yet ?

* To some it may be interesting to remember that this cabinet, in which the most powerful of the Bourbon kings is represented as rewarding the minister of his pleasures, is the same as that in which is yet shown the table upon which Napoleon Bonaparte (son of a gentleman of Corsica) signed the abdication of the titles and dominions of Charlemagne !

Louis. But gives refusal

A voice that puts ev'n passion to the blush

To own one wish so soft a heart denies it !

Lau. A woman's No ! is but a crooked path

Unto a woman's Yes ! Your Majesty

Saw her to-day ?

Louis No !—Grammont undertakes

To bear, in secret, to her hand, some lines

That pray a meeting.—I await his news.

[*Continues writing.*]

Lau. [*aside*]. I'll not relate my tilt with Bragelone.

First, I came off the worst.—No man of sense

Ever confesses that ! And, secondly,

This most officious, curious, hot-brain'd Quixote

Might make him jealous ; jealous kings are peevish ;

And, if he fall to questioning the lady,

She'll learn who told the tale, and spite the teller.

Oh ! the great use of logic !

Louis. 'Tis in vain

I strive by business to beguile impatience !

How my heart beats !—Well, count !

Enter GRAMMONT.

Gram.

Alas, my liege !

Louis. Alas !—Speak out !

Gram.

The court has lost La Vallière !

Louis. Ha !—lost !

Gram.

She has fled, and none guess whither.

Louis.

Fled !

I'll not believe it !—Fled !

Lau.

What matters, sire ?

No spot is sacred from the king !

Louis.

By Heaven

I *am* a king!—Not all the arms of Europe
 Could wrest one jewel from my crown. And she—
 What is my crown to her! I am a king!
 Who stands between the king and her he loves
 Becomes a traitor—and may find a tyrant!
 Follow me!

[*Exit* LOUIS.]*Gram.*

Who e'er heard of maids of honour
 Flying from kings?

Lau.

Ah, had *you* been a maid,
 How kind you would have been, you rogue!—Come on!

[*Exeunt* LAUZUN and GRAMMONT]

SCENE IV.

*The Cloisters of a Convent—Night—Thunder and Lightning, the latter
 made visible through the long oriel windows.*

Mdlle. de la Vall. [rising]. Darkly the night sweeps on.

No thought of sleep

Steals to my heart. What sleep is to the world
 Prayer is to me—life's balm, and grief's oblivion!
 Yet, ev'n before the altar of my God,
 Unhallow'd fire is raging through my veins—
 Heav'n on my lips, but earth within my heart—
 And while I pray *his* memory prompts the prayer,
 And all I ask of Heaven is—"Guard my Louis!"
 Forget him—*that* I dare not pray! I would not,
 Ev'n if I could, be happy, and forget him!

[*Thunder.*]

Roll on, roll on, dark chariot of the storm,
Whose wheels are thunder !—the rack'd elements
Can furnish forth no tempest like the war
Of passions in one weak and erring heart !

[*The bell tolls one.*

Hark to night's funeral knell ! How through the roar
Of winds and thunder thrills that single sound,
Solemnly audible !—the tongue of time,
In time's most desolate hour !—it bids us muse
On worlds which love can reach not ! Life runs fast
To its last sands ! To bed, to bed !—to tears
And wishes for the grave !—to bed, to bed !

[*A trumpet is heard without*

Two or three Nuns hurry across the stage.

First Nun. Most strange !

Second Nun. In such a night, too ! The great gates,
That ne'er uncloze save to a royal guest,
Unbarr'd !

Mdlle. de la Vall. What fear, what hope, by turns dis-
tracts me !

[*The trumpet sounds again.*

First Nun. Hark ! in the court, the ring of hoofs !—
the door
Creaks on the sullen hinge !

Lau. [*without*]. Make way !—the king !

Enter LOUIS and LAUZUN.

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*rushing forward*]. Oh, Louis !—oh,
beloved ! [*Then pausing abruptly.*] No, touch
me not !

Leave me ! in pity leave me ! Heavenly Father,

I fly to thee ! Protect me from his arms—
Protect me from myself !

Louis. Oh bliss !—Louise !

Enter Abbess and other Nuns.

Abbess. Peace, peace ! What clamour desecrates the
shrine

And solitudes of God ?

Lau. Madam, your knee—

The king !

Abbess. The king !—you mock me, sir !

Louis [*quitting MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE*]. Behold
Your sovereign, reverend mother ! We have come
To thank you for your shelter of this lady,
And to reclaim our charge.

Abbess. My liege, these walls
Are sacred even from the purple robe
And sceptred hand.

Louis. She hath not ta'en the vow !
She's free !—we claim her !—she is of our court !
Woman,—go to !

Abbess. The maiden, sire, is free !
Your royal lips have said it !—She is free !
And if this shrine her choice, who'er compels her
Forth from the refuge, doth incur the curse
The Roman Church awards to even kings !
Speak, lady !—dost thou claim against the court
The asylum of the cloister ?

Louis. Darest thou brave us ?

Lau. [*aside to Louis*]. Pardon, my liege !—reflect ! Let
not the world
Say that the king—

Louis. Can break his bonds !—Away !

I was a man before I was a king !

[*Approaching MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE.*

Lady, we do command your presence ! [*Lowering his voice.*]

Sweet !

Adored Louise !—if ever to your ear

My whispers spoke in music—if my life

Be worth the saving, do not now desert me !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Let me not hear him, Heaven !—

Strike all my senses !

Make—make me dumb, deaf, blind,—but keep me honest !

Abbess. Sire, you have heard her answer !

Louis [*advancing passionately, pauses, and then with great dignity.*]

Abbess, no !

This lady was intrusted to our charge—

A fatherless child !—The king is now her father !

Madam, we would not wrong you ; but we know

That sometimes most unhallow'd motives wake

Your zeal for converts !—This young maid is wealthy,

And nobly born !—Such proselytes may make

A convent's pride, but oft a convent's victims !

No more !—we claim the right the law awards us,

Free and alone to commune with this maiden.

If then her choice go with you—be it so ;

We are no tyrant ! Peace !—retire !

Abbess.

My liege !

Forgive—

Louis. We do ! Retire !

[*LAUZUN, the Abbess, &c., withdraw.*

Louis. We are alone !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Alone !—No, God is present, and the conscience !

Louis. Ah! fear'st thou, then, that heart that would
resign

Ev'n love itself to guard one pang from thee?

Mdlle. de la Vall. I *must* speak!—Sire, if every drop
of blood

Were in itself a life, I'd shed them all

For one hour's joy to thee!—But fame and virtue—

My father's grave—my mother's lonely age—

These, these—

[*Thunder.*

I hear their voice!—the fires of Heaven

Seem to me like the eyes of angels, and

Warn me against myself!—Farewell!

Louis.

Louise,

I will not hear thee! What! farewell! that word

Sounds like a knell to all that's worth the living!

Farewell! why, then, farewell all peace to Louis,

And the poor king is once more but a thing

Of state and forms. The impulse and the passion—

The blessed air of happy human life—

The all that made him envy not his subjects,

Dies in that word! Ah, canst thou—dar'st thou say it?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Oh, speak not thus!—Speak harshly!
threat, command!—

Be all the king!

Louis.

The king! he kneels to thee!

Mdlle. de la Vall. I'm weak—be generous! My own
soul betrays me;

But *thou* betray me not!

Louis.

Nay, hear me, sweet one!

Desert me not this once, and I will swear

To know no guiltier wish—to curb my heart—

To banish hope from love—and nurse no dream

Thy spotless soul itself shall blush to cherish !

Hear me, Louise—thou lov'st me ?

Mdlle. de la Vall.

Love thee, Louis !

Louis. Thou lov'st me,—then confide ! Who loves,
trusts ever !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Trust thee !—ah ! dare I ?

Louis [clasping her in his arms]. Ay, till death ! What
ho !

Lauzun ! I say !

Enter LAUZUN.

Mdlle. de la Vall. No, no !

Louis. Not trust me, dearest ?

[*She falls on his shoulder—the Abbess and Nuns advance.*]

Abbess. Still firm !

Lau. No, madam !—Way there for the king !



ACT III.—SCENE I.

*An Antechamber in the Palace of MADAME LA DUCHESSE
DE LA VALLIÈRE at Versailles.*

*Enter LAUZUN and MADAME DE MONTESPAN
at opposite doors,*

Lau. Ha ! my fair friend, well met !—how fares
Athenè ?

Mme. de Mon. Weary with too much gaiety ! Now,
tell me,

Do you ne'er tire of splendour ? Does this round

Of gaudy pomps—this glare of glitt'ring nothings—
Does it ne'er pall upon you? To my eyes
'Tis as the earth would be if turf'd with scarlet,
Without one spot of green.

Lau.

We all feel thus

Until we are used to it. Art has grown *my* nature,
And if I see green fields, or ill-dress'd people,
I cry "How artificial!" With me, "*Nature*"
Is "Paris and Versailles." The word, "a man,"
Means something noble, that one sees at court.
Woman's the thing Heaven made for wearing trinkets
And talking scandal. That's my state of nature!
You'll like it soon; you have that temper which
Makes courts its element.

Mme. de Mon.

And how?—define, sir.

Lau. First, then—but shall I not offend?

Mme. de Mon.

Be candid.

I'd know my faults, to make them look like virtues.

Lau. First, then, Athenè, you've an outward frankness.
Deceit in you looks honester than truth.
Thoughts, at court, like faces on the stage,
Require some rouge. You rouge your thoughts so well,
That one would deem their only fault, that nature
Gave them too bright a bloom!

Mme. de Mon.

Proceed!

Lau.

Your wit

Is of the true court breed—it plays with nothings;
Just bright enough to warm, but never burn—
Excites the dull, but ne'er offends the vain.
You have much energy; it looks like feeling!
Your cold ambition seems an easy impulse;
Your head most ably counterfeits the heart,

But never, like the heart, betrays itself !

Oh ! you'll succeed at court !—you see I know you !

Not so this new-made duchess—young La Vallière.

Mme. de Mon. The weak, fond fool !

Lau. Yes, weak—*she* has a heart ;

Yet *you*, too, love the king !

Mme. de Mon. And she does *not* !

She loves but *Louis*—I but love the *king* :

Pomp, riches, state, and power—these, who would love not ?

Lau. Bravo ! well said !—Oh, you'll succeed at court !

I knew it well ! it was for this I chose you—

Induced your sapient lord to waste no more

Your beauty in the shade—for this prepared

The duchess to receive you to her bosom,

Her dearest friend ; for this have duly fed

The king's ear with your praise, and clear'd your way

To rule a sovereign and to share a throne.

Mme. de Mon. I know thou hast been my architect of
power ;

And, when the pile is built—

Lau. [*with a smile*]. Could still o'erthrow it,

If thou couldst play the ingrate !

Mme. de Mon. I !—nay !

Lau. Hear me !

Each must have need of each. Long live the king !

Still let his temples ache beneath the crown.

But all that kings can give—wealth, rank, and power—

Must be for *us*—the king's friend and his favourite.

Mme. de Mon. But is it easy to supplant the duchess ?

All love La Vallière ! Her meek nature shrinks

Ev'n from our homage ; and she wears her state

As if she pray'd the world to pardon greatness.

Lau. And thus destroys herself! At court, Athenè, Vice, to win followers, takes the front of virtue, And looks the dull plebeian things called *moral* To scorn, until they blush to be unlike her. Why is De Lauzun not her friend? Why plotting For a new rival? Why?—Because De Lauzun Wins not the power he look'd for from her friendship! She keeps not old friends!—and she makes no new ones!

For who would be a friend to one who deems it A crime to ask his Majesty a favour?

“*Friends*” is a phrase at court that means *Promotion*!

Mme. de Mon. Her folly, I confess, would not be mine. But, grant her faults—the king still loves the duchess!

Lau. Since none are by, I'll venture on a treason, And say, the king's a man!—and men will change! I have his ear, and you shall win his eye.

'Gainst a new face, and an experienced courtier, What chance hath this poor, loving, simple woman? Besides, she has too much conscience for a king!

He likes not to look up, and feel how low, Ev'n on the throne that overlooks the world, His royal greatness dwarfs beside that heart That never stoop'd to sin, save when it loved him!

Mme. de Mon. You're eloquent, my lord!

Lau. Ah! of such natures You and I know but little!—[*Aside.*] This must cease, Or I shall all disclose my real aims!

[*Aloud.*] The king is with the duchess?

Mme. de Mon.

Yes.

Lau.

As yet

She doth suspect you not?

Mme. de Mon. Suspect !—the puppet !
No ; but full oft, her head upon my bosom,
Calls me her truest friend !—invites me ever
To amuse the king with my enlivening sallies,—
And still breaks off, in sighing o'er the past,
To wish her spirit were as blithe as mine,
And fears her Louis wearies of her sadness.

Lau. So, the plot ripens !—ere the king came hither,
I had prepared his royal pride to chafe
At that sad face, whose honest sorrow wears
Reproach unconsciously ! You'll learn the issue !
Now, then, farewell !—We understand each other !

[*Exit LAUZUN.*

Mme. de Mon. And once I loved this man !—and still
might love him,
But that I love ambition ! Yes, my steps
Now need a guide ; but once upon the height,
And I will have no partner ! Thou, lord duke,
With all thine insolent air of proud protection,
Thou shalt wait trembling on my nod, and bind
Thy fortune to my wheels ! O man !—vain man !
Well sung the poet,—when this power of beauty
Heaven gave our sex, it gave the only sceptre
Which makes the world a slave ! And I will wield it !

[*Exit MME. DE MONTESPAN.*

SCENE II.

The scene opens and discovers the King, and the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE at chess.

Louis. But one move more !

Duch. de la Vall. Not so ! I check the king.

Louis. A vain attempt !—the king is too well guarded !
There,—check again ! Your game is lost !

Duch. de la Vall. As usual,
Ev'n from this mimic stage of war you rise
Ever the victor.

[They leave the table and advance.]

Louis. 'Twere a fairer fortune,
My own Louise, to reconcile the vanquish'd !

Duch. de la Vall. [*sadly*]. My best-loved Louis !

Louis. Why so sad a tone ?
Nay, smile, Louise !—Love thinks himself aggrieved
If Care casts shadows o'er the heart it seeks
To fill with cloudless sunshine ! Smile, Louise !
Ev'n unkind words were kinder than sad looks.
There—*now* thou gladd'st me !

Duch. de la Vall. Yet ev'n thou, methought,
Didst wear, this morn, a brow on which the light
Shone less serenely than its wont !

Louis. This morn !
Ay, it is true !—this morn I heard that France
Hath lost a subject monarchs well might mourn !
Oh ! little know the world how much a king,

Whose life is past in *purchasing* devotion,
Loses in one who merited all favour
And scorn to ask the least ! A king, Louise,
Sees but the lackeys of mankind. The true
Lords of our race—the high chivalric hearts—
Nature's nobility—alas, are proud,
And stand aloof, lest slaves should say they flatter !
Of such a mould was he whom France deplores.

Duch. de la Vall. Tell me his name, that I, with thee,
may mourn him.

Louis. A noble name, but a more noble bearer ;
Not to be made by, but to make, a lineage.
Once, too, at Dunkirk, 'twixt me and the foe,
He thrust his gallant breast, already seamed
With warrior-wounds, and *his* blood flow'd for mine.
Dead !—his just merits all unrecompensed !—
Obscured, like sun-light, by the suppliant clouds !
He should have died a marshal ! Death did wrong
To strike so soon ! Alas, brave Bragelone !

Duch. de la Vall. Ha !—did I hear aright, my liege—
my Louis ?

That name—that name !—thou saidst not “Bragelone” ?

Louis. Such was his name, not often heard at court.
Thou didst not know him ? What ! thou art pale ! thou
weepest !—

Thou art ill ! Louise, look up !

[*He leads her to a seat.*

Duch. de la Vall. Be still, O Conscience !

I did not slay him !—Died *too soon* ! Alas !
He should have died with all his hopes unblighted,
Ere I was—what I am !

Louis. What mean these words ?

Duch. de la Vall. How did death strike him?—what disease?

Louis.

I know not.

He had retired from service ; and in peace
Breathed out his soul to some remoter sky !
France only guards his fame ! What was he to thee
That thou shouldst weep for him ?

Duch. de la Vall.

Hast thou ne'er heard

We were betrothed in youth ?

Louis [*agitated and aside*]. Lauzun speaks truth !
I'd not her virgin heart—she loved another !

[*Aloud.*] Betrothed ! You mourn him deeply !

Duch. de la Vall.

Sire, I do.

That broken heart !—I was its dream—its idol !
And with regret is mingled—what repentance ?

Louis [*coldly*]. Repentance, madam ! Well, the word
is gracious !

Duch. de la Vall. Pardon ! oh, pardon ! But the blow
was sudden ;

How can the heart play courtier with remorse ?

Louis. Remorse !—again. Why be at once all honest,
And say you love me not !

Duch. de la Vall. Not love you, Louis ?

Louis. Not if you feel repentance to have loved !

Duch. de la Vall. What ! think'st thou, Louis, I should
love thee more

Did I love virtue less, or less regret it ?

Louis. I pray you truce with these heroic speeches ;
They please us in romance—in life they weary.

Duch. de la Vall. Louis, do I deserve this ?

Louis.

Rather, lady,

Do I deserve the mute reproach of sorrow ?

Still less these constant, never-soothed complaints—
This waiting-woman jargon of "*lost virtue*."

Duch. de la Vall. Sire, this from you !

Louis. Why, oft, could others hear thee,

Well might they deem thee some poor village Phœbe,
Whom her false Lubin had deceived, and left,
Robb'd of her only dower ! and not the great
Duchess la Vallière, in our realm of France
Second to none but our anointed race ;
The envy of the beauty and the birth
Of Europe's court—our city of the world !
Is it so great disgrace, Louise la Vallière,
To wear, unrivall'd, in thy breast, the heart
Of Bourbon's latest, nor her least, of kings ?

Duch. de la Vall. Sire, when you deigned to love me, I
had hoped

You knew the sunshine of your royal favour
Had fallen on a lowly flower. Let others
Deem that the splendour consecrates the sin !
I'd loved thee with as pure and proud a love,
If thou hadst been the poorest cavalier
That ever served a king—thou know'st it, Louis !

Louis. I would not have it so ! my fame, my glory,
The purple and the orb, are part of me ;
And thou shouldst love them for my sake, and feel
I were not Louis were I less the king.
Still weeping ! Fie ! I tell thee tears freeze back
The very love I still would bear to thee !

Duch. de la Vall. "Would *still* !"—didst thou say
"*still* ?"

Louis. Come, lady !

Woman, to keep her empire o'er the heart,

Must learn its nature—mould unto its bias—
And rule by never differing from our humours.

Duch. de la Vall. I'll school my features, teach my lips
to smile,

Be all thou wilt ; but say not "*still*," dear Louis !

Louis. Well, well ! no further words ; let peace be
with us.

[*Aside.*] By Heaven, she weeps with yet intenser
passion !

It must be that she loved this Bragelone,
And mourns the loftier fate that made her mine !

[*Aloud.*] This gallant soldier, madam, your betrothed,
Hath some share in your tears ?

Duch. de la Vall.

Oh, name him not ;

My tears are all unworthy dew to fall

Upon a tomb so honour'd !

Louis.

Grant me patience !

These scenes are very tedious, fair La Vallière.

In truth, we kings have, in the council-chamber,

Enough to make us tearful ;—in the bower

We would have livelier subjects to divert us.

Duch. de la Vall. Again forgive me ! I am sick at
heart ;

I pray you pardon ;—these sad news have marr'd

The music of your presence, and have made me

Fit but for solitude. I pray you, sire,

Let me retire ; and when again I greet you,

I'll wear the mien you'd have me !

Louis.

Be it so !

Let me no more disturb you from your thoughts ;

They must be sad. So brave—and your betrothed !

Your grief becomes you.

Duch. de la Vall. You forgive me, Louis ?
We do not part unkindly ?

Louis. Fair one, no ?

[*Exit* LA VALLIÈRE.

Louis. She was my first love, and my fondest.—*Was !*
Alas, the word must come !—I love her yet,
But love wanes glimmering to that twilight—friendship !
Grant that she never loved this Bragelone ;
Still, tears and sighs make up dull interludes
In passion's short-lived drama ! She is good,
Gentle, and meek,—and I do think she loves me,
(A truth no king is sure of !)—But, in fine,
I have begun to feel the hours are long
Pass'd in her presence ! what I hotly sought,
Coldly 'I weary of. I'll seek De Lauzun :
I like his wit—I almost like his knavery ;
It never makes us yawn, like high-flown virtues.
Thirst, hunger, rest—these are the wants of peasants :
A courtier's wants are titles, place, and gold ;
But a poor king, who has these wants so sated,
Has only one want left—to be amused !

[*Exit* LOUIS.

SCENE III.

Re-enter the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Duch. de la Vall. Louis ! dear Louis !—Gone ! alas !
and left me
Half in displeasure !—I was wrong, methinks,

To—no !—I was not wrong to *feel* remorse,
But wrong to give it utterance !

Enter MADAME DE MONTESPAN.

Mme. de Mon. What ! alone,
Fair friend ? I thought the king——

Duch. de la Vall. Has gone, in anger ;
Cold, and in anger.

Mme. de Mon. What, with *thee*, dear lady ?
On the smooth surface of that angel meekness
I should have thought no angry breath could linger.
But men and kings are——

Duch. de la Vall. Hush ! I was to blame.
The king's all goodness. Shall I write to him ?
Letters have not our looks—and, oh, one look !
How many hardest hearts one look hath won,
A life consumed in words had woo'd in vain !

Mme. de Mon. To-night there is high revel at the
court ;
There you may meet your truant king.

Duch. de la Vall. To-night !
An age !—How many hours to night ?

Mme. de Mon. You know
My office makes my home the royal palace ;
I serve the queen, and thus shall see your Louis
Ere the sun set.

Duch. de la Vall. You !—happy you !

Mme. de Mon. Perchance
(The king is ever gracious to your friends,
And knows me of the nearest), I might whisper,
Though with less sweet a tone, your message to him,
And be your dove, and bear you back the olive ?

Duch. de la Vall. My kind Athenè !

Mme. de Mon. Nay, 'tis yours the kindness,

To wear my love so near your heart. But, tell me,
Since you accept my heraldry, the cause
Of strife between you in this court of love.

Duch. de la Vall. Alas ! I know not, save that I
offended !

The wherefore boots the heart that loves to know ?

Mme. de Mon. Not much, I own, the poor defendant—
woman,

But much the advocate ; I need the brief.

Duch. de la Vall. Methinks his kingly nature chafes to
see

It cannot rule the conscience as the heart ;

But, tell him, ever henceforth I will keep

Sad thoughts for lonely hours.—Athenè, tell him,

That if he smile once more upon Louise,

The smile shall never pass from that it shines on ;

Say—but I'll write myself.

[*Sits down to the table and writes.*

Mme. de Mon. [*aside*]. What need of schemes—
Lauzun's keen wit—Athenè's plotting spirit ?

She weaves herself the web that shall ensnare her !

Duch. de la Vall. There ; back these feeble words with
all thy beauty,

Thy conquering eyes, and thy bewitching smile.

Sure never suit can fail with such a pleader !

And now a little while to holier sadness,

And thine accusing memory, Bragelone !

Mme. de Mon. Whom speak you of?—the hero of the
Fronde ?

Who seem'd the last of the old Norman race,

And half preserved to this degenerate age
The lordly shape the ancient Bayards wore !

Duch. de la Vall. You praise him well ! He was my
father's friend,

And should have been his son. We were affianced,
And—but no more ! Ah ! cruel, cruel Louis !

You mourn'd for him—how much more cause have I !

Mme. de Mon. [*quickly*]. What ! he is dead ? your grief
the king resented ?

Knew he your troth had thus been plighted ?

Duch. de la Vall. Yes :

And still he seem'd to deem it sin to mourn him !

Mme. de Mon. [*aside*]. A clue—another clue—that I
will follow,

Until it lead me to the throne !—[*Aloud.*] Well, cheer
thee ;

Trust your true friend ; rely on my persuasion.

Methinks I never task'd its powers till now.

Farewell, and fear not ! Oh ! I'll plead your cause,

As if myself the client !—[*Aside.*] Thou art sentenced !

[*Exit MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*]

Duch. de la Vall. 'Tis a sweet solace still to have a
friend—

A friend in woman ! Oh, to what a reed

We bind our destinies, when man we love !

Peace, honour, conscience lost—if I lose him,

What have I left ? How sinks my heart within me !

I'll to my chamber ; there the day of tears

Lends night its smile ! And I'm the thing they envy !

[*Exit DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.*]

SCENE IV.

The Gardens of Versailles—LAUZUN, GRAMMONT, and Courtiers.

Lau. 'Tis now the hour in which our royal master
Honours the ground of his rejoicing gardens
By his illustrious footsteps!—there, my lords,
That is the true style-courtier!

Gram. Out upon you!
Your phrase would suit some little German prince,
Of fifteen hundred quarterings and five acres,
And not the world's great Louis! 'Tis the hour
When Phœbus shrinks abash'd, and all the stars
Envy the day that it beholds the king!

Enter LOUIS.

Louis. My lords,
Pray you be cover'd. Hark ye, dear De Lauzun.
[*Exeunt the Courtiers, as the King takes LAUZUN aside.*
The fair De Montespan?

Lau. Is worth the loving;
And, by mine honour, while we speak she comes!
A happy fortune. Sire, may I withdraw? [*Exit.*

Enter MADAME DE MONTESPAN. [*Salutes the King
and passes on.*]

Louis. Fair madam, we had hoped you with you brought
Some bright excuse to grace our cheerless presence
With a less short-lived light! You dawn upon us
Only to make us more regret your setting.

Mme de Mon. Sire, if I dared, I would most gladly hail
A few short moments to arrest your presence,
And rid me of a soft, yet painful duty.

Louis. 'Tis the first time, be sure, so sweet a voice
E'er craved a sanction for delighting silence.
Speak on, we pray thee !

Mme. de Mon. Gracious sire, the duchess,
Whom you have lately left, she fears, in anger,
Besought me to present this letter to you.

Louis [*takes the letter, and aside*]. She blushes while she
speaks !—'Tis passing strange,
I ne'er remark'd those darkly-dreaming eyes,
That melt in their own light !

[*Reads, and carelessly puts up the letter.*

It scarcely suits

Her dignity, and ours, to choose a witness
To what hath chanced between us. She is good ,
But her youth, spent in some old country castle,
Knows not the delicate spirit of a court.

Mme. de Mon. She bade me back her suit. Alas ! my
liege,
Who can succeed, if fair La Vallière fail ?

Louis. She bade thee ?—she was prudent ! Were I
woman,
And loved, I'd not have chosen such a herald.

Mme. de Mon. Love varies in its colours with all tem-
pers ;
The duchess is too proud to fear a rival,
Too beautiful to find one. May I take
Some word of comfort back to cheer her sadness,
Made doubly deep by thoughts of your displeasure,
And grief for a dear friend ?

Louis.

Ay, *that's* the sadness !

Mme. de Mon. He was a gallant lord, this Bragelone,
And her betrothed. Perchance in youth she loved him,
Ere the great sun had quench'd the morning star !

Louis. She loved him !—think'st thou so ?

Mme. de Mon.

Indeed I know not ;

But I have heard her eloquent in praise,
And seen her lost in woe. You will forgive her !

Louis. Forgive her ?—there's no cause !

Mme. de Mon.

Now, bless you, sire,

For that one word. My task is done.

Louis.

Already ?

Mme. de Mon. What can I more ? Oh, let me hasten
back !

What rapture must be hers who can but fill
An atom of the heart of godlike Louis !
How much more the whole soul !—To lose thy love
Must be, not grief, but some sublime despair,
Like that the Roman felt who lost a world !

Louis [aside]. By Heaven, she fires me !—a brave,
royal spirit,

Worthy to love a king !

Mme. de Mon.

To know thee hers,

What pride !—what glory ! Though all earth cried
“Shame !”

Earth could not still the trumpet at her heart,
That, with its swelling and exultant voice,
Told her the earth was but the slave of Louis,
And *she* the partner ! And, O hour of dread !
When (for the hour must come) some fairer form
Shall win thee from her—still, methinks, 'twould be
A boast to far posterity to point

To all the trophies piled about thy throne,
And say—"He loved me once!"—O sire, your pardon;
I am too bold.

Louis. Why, this were love, indeed,
Could we but hope to win it. And such love
Would weave the laurel in its wreaths of myrtle.
Beautiful lady! while thou speak'st, I dream
What love should be,—and feel where love is not!
Thou com'st the suitor, to remain the judge;
And I could kneel to thee for hope and mercy.

Mme. de Mon. Ah, no!—ah, no!—she is my friend.
And if

She love not as I love—I mean, I *might* love—
Still she *believes* she loves thee. Tempt me not.
Who could resist thee! Sire, farewell!

[*Exit MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*]

Louis. Her voice
Is hush'd; but still its queen-like music lingers
In my rapt ears. I dreamt Louise had loved me;
She who felt love disgrace! Before the true,
How the tame counterfeit grows pale and lifeless.
By the sad brow of yon devout La Vallière
I feel a man, and fear myself a culprit!
But this high spirit wakes in mine the sense
Of what it is—I *am* that Louis whom
The world has called "The Great!"—and in her pride
Mirror mine own. This jaded life assumes
The zest, the youth, the glory of *excitement*!
To-night we meet again;—speed fast, dull hours!

[*Exit LOUIS.*]

SCENE V.

Grand Saloon in the Palace of Versailles—in the background the suite of apartments is seen in perspective—Courtiers, Ladies, &c.

First Cour. [approaching the *Duch. de la Vall.*]. Madam,
your goodness is to France a proverb !

If I might dare request, this slight memorial
You would convey to our most gracious master ?
The rank of colonel in the royal guard
Is just now vacant. True, I have not served ;
But I do trust my valour is well-known :
I've kill'd three noted swordsmen in a duel !—
And, for the rest, a word from you were more
Than all the laurels Holland gave to others.

Duch. de la Vall. My lord, forgive me ! I might ill
deserve

The friendship of a monarch, if, forgetting
That honours are the attributes of merit ;—
And they who sell the service of the public
For the false coin, soft smiles and honey'd words
Forged in the antechambers of a palace,
Defraud a people to degrade a king !
If you have merits, let *them* plead for you ;
Nor ask in whispers what you claim from justice.

Mme. de Mon. [to first Courtier, as the *Duch. de la Vall.*
turns away]. Give me the paper. Hush ! the king
shall see it !

[*Music.*

Enter the KING, GRAMMONT, and other Courtiers. He pauses by the QUEEN, and accosts her respectfully in dumb show.

Gram. [aside]. With what a stately and sublime decorum
His majesty throws grandeur o'er his foibles !
He not disguises vice ; but makes vice kingly—
Most gorgeous of all sensualists !

Lau. How different
His royal rival in the chase of pleasure,
The spendthrift, sauntering Second Charles of England !

Gram. Ay, Jove to Comus !

Lau. Silence ! Jove approaches !

[The crowd breaks up into groups ; the King passes slowly from each till he joins the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE ; the Courtiers retire.]

Louis. Why, this is well. I thank you.

Duch. de la Vall. And forgive me ?

Louis. Forgive you ! You mistake me : wounded feeling
Is not displeasure. Let this pass, Louise.

Your lovely friend has a most heavenly smile !

Duch. de la Vall. And a warm heart. In truth, my
liege, I'm glad

You see her with my eyes.

Louis. You have no friend

Whose face it glads me more to look upon.

[Aside, and gazing on MONTESPAN.]
(What thrilling eyes !)—*[Aloud.]* My thanks are due to
her,

For, with the oil of her mellifluous voice,
Smoothing the waves the passing breeze had ruffled.

[Joins MADAME DE MONTESPAN, and leads her through the crowd to the back of the stage.]

Lau. Your grace resolves no more to be content
Eclipsing others. You eclipse yourself.

Duch. de la Vall. I thought you were a friend, and not
a flatterer.

Lau. Friendship would lose its dearest privilege
If friendship were forbidden to admire !

Why, ev'n the king admires your grace's friend,—
Told me to-day she was the loveliest lady
The court could boast. Nay, see how, while they speak,
He gazes on her. How his breathing fans
The locks that shade the roses of her cheek !

Duch. de la Vall. Ha ! Nay, be still, my heart.

Lau. It is but friendship ;
But it looks wondrous warm !

Duch. de la Vall. He cannot mean it !
And yet—and yet—he lingers on her hand—
He whispers !

Lau. How the gossips gaze and smile !
There'll be much scandal.

Duch. de la Vall. Lauzun !—what !—thou think'st not—
No, no, thou canst not think——

Lau. That courts know treachery,
That women are ambitious, or men false ;
I will not think it. Pshaw !

Duch. de la Vall. My brain swims round !
Louis, of late, hath been so changed. How fair
She looks to-night !—and, oh, *she* has not fallen !
He comes—he nears us—he has left her. Fie !
My foolish fancies wronged him !

Lau. The spell works.

Mme. de Mon. [*as the king quits her, to First Courtier,*
giving him back the paper]. My lord, your suit is
granted.

First Cour.

Blessings, madam !

[*The other Courtiers come round him.*]

Second Cour. Her influence must be great. I know
three dukes

Most pressing for the post.

Third Cour.

A rising sun,

Worthier of worship than that cold La Vallière.

The king as well, methinks, might have no mistress,

As one by whom no courtier grew the richer.

[*The Courtiers group round MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*]

Louis. My lords, you do remember the bright lists

Which, in the place termed thenceforth "*The Carrousel*," *

We sometime held ?—a knightly tournament,

That brought us back the age of the first Francis !

Lau. Of all your glorious festivals, the greatest !

Who but remembers ?

Duch. de la Vall. [*Aside*]. Then he wore my colours.

How kind to bring back to my yearning heart

That golden spring-time of our early loves !

Louis. Next week we will revive the heroic pageant.

Proud plumes shall wave, and levell'd spears be shiver'd ;

Ourselves will take the lists, and do defy

The chivalry of our renownèd France,

In honour of that lady of our court

For whom we wear the colours, and the motto

Which suits her best—" *Most bright where all are bril-
liant !* "

* The *Place du Carrousel* was so named from a splendid festival given by Louis. On the second day, devoted to knightly games, the king, who appeared in the character of *Roger*, carried off four prizes. All the crown jewels were prodigalized on his arms and the trappings of his horse.

Gram. Oh, a most kingly notion !

Louis. Ere we part,

Let each knight choose his colours and his lady.

Ourselves have set the example.

[*The Courtiers mingle with the Ladies, &c., many Ladies give their colours.*]

Duch. de la Vall. [*timidly*]. Oh, my Louis !

I read thy heart ; thou hast chosen this device

To learn thy poor La Vallière to be proud.

Nay, turn not from my blessings. Once before

You wore my colours, though I gave them not.

To-night I give them !—Louis loves me still !

[*Takes one of the knots from her breast, and presents it.*]

Louis. Lady, the noblest hearts in France would beat

More high beneath your badge. Alas ! *my service*

Is vow'd already *here*.

[*Turning to MADAME DE MONTESPAN, and placing a knot of her colours over his order of the Saint Esprit.*]

These are my colours !

Duch. de la Vall. How ! How !

[*The King converses apart with MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*]

Lau. [*to the Duch. de la Vall.*] Be calm, your grace ; a thousand eyes

Are on you. Give the envious crowd no triumph.

Ah ! had *my* fortune won so soft a heart

I would have——

Duch. de la Vall. Peace ?—Away ! Betray'd !—Undone !

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

*The Gardens at Versailles.**Enter LAUZUN.*

Lau. So far, so prosperous ! From the breast of Louis,
The blooming love it bore so long a summer
Falls like a fruit o'er-ripe ; and, in the court,
And o'er the king, this glittering Montespan
Queens it without a rival,—awes all foes,
And therefore makes all friends. State, office, honours,
Reflect her smile, or fade before her frown.
So far, so well ! Enough for Montespan.
For Lauzun now !—I love this fair La Vallière,
As well, at least, as woman's worth the loving ;
And if the jewel has one trifling flaw,
The gold 'tis set in will redeem the blemish.
The king's no niggard lover ; and her wealth
Is vast. I have the total in my tablets—
(Besides estates in Picardy and Provence.)
I'm very poor—my debtors very pressing.
I've robb'd the duchess of a faithless lover,
To give myself a wife, and her a husband.
Wedlock's a holy thing,—and wealth a good one !

Enter LOUIS.

Louis. The day is long—I have not seen *Athènes*.
Pleasure is never stagnant in her presence ;
But every breeze of woman's changeful skies
Ripples the stream, and freshens e'en the sunshine.

Lau. 'Tis said, your Majesty, "that contrast's sweet,"
And she you speak of well contrasts another.
Whom once——

Louis. I loved ; and still devoutly honour.
This poor La Vallière !—could we will affection,
I would have never changed. And even now
I feel Athenè has but charm'd my senses,
And my void heart still murmurs for Louise !
I would we could be friends, since now not lovers,
Nor dare be happy while I know her wretched.

Lau. Wearies she still your Majesty with prayers,
Tender laments, and passionate reproaches ?

Louis. Her love outlives its hopes.

Lau. An irksome task—
To witness tears we cannot kiss away,
And with cold friendship freeze the ears of love !

Louis. Most irksome and most bootless !

Lau. Haply, sire,
In one so pure, the charm of wedded life
Might lull keen griefs to rest, and curb the love
Thou fliest from to the friendship that thou seekest ?

Louis. I've thought of this. The Duke de Longueville
loves her,
And hath besought before her feet to lay
His princely fortunes.

Lau. [*quickly*]. Ha !—and she—

Louis. Rejects him.

Lau. Sire, if love's sun, once set, bequeaths a twilight,
'Twould only hover o'er some form whom chance
Had link'd with Louis—some one (though unworthy)
Whose presence took a charm from brighter thoughts
That knit it with the past.

Louis. Why, how now, duke !—
Thou speak'st not of thyself ?

Lau. I dare not, sire !

Louis. Ha, ha !—poor Lauzun !—what ! the soft La
Vallière

Transfer her sorrowing heart to thee ! Ha, ha !

Lau. My name is not less noble than De Longueville's ;
My glory greater, since the world has said
Louis esteems me more.

Louis. Esteems ! No ;—favours !
And thou dost think that she, who shrunk from love,
Lest love were vice, would wed the wildest lord
That ever laugh'd at virtue ?

Lau. Sire, you wrong me,
Or else you (pardon me) condemn yourself.
Is it too much for one the king calls friend
To aspire to one the king has call'd——

Louis. Sir, hold !
I never so malign'd that hapless lady
As to give *her* the title only due
To such as Montespan, who glories in it—
The *last* my *mistress* ; but the first my *victim* :
A nice distinction, taught not in your logic,
Which, but just now, confused esteem and favour.
Go to ! we kings are not the dupes you deem us.

Lau. [*aside*]. So high ! I'll win La Vallière to avenge me,
And humble this imperial vanity.

[*Aloud.*] Sire, I offend ! Permit me to retire,
And mourn your anger ; nor presume to guess
Whence came the cause. And, since it seems your *favour*
Made me aspire too high, in that I loved
Where you, sire, made love noble, and half-dream'd

Might be—nay, am not—wholly there disdain'd—

Louis. How, duke ?

Lau. I do renounce at once

The haughty vision. Sire, permit my absence.

Louis. Lauzun, thou hintest that, were suit allow'd thee,
La Vallière might not scorn it ;—is it so ?

Lau. I crave your pardon, sire.

Louis. Must I ask twice ?

Lau. I do believe, then, sire, with time and patience,
The duchess might be won to—*not reject me !*

Louis. Go, then, and prove thy fortune. We permit
thee.

And, if thou prosperest, why then love's a riddle,

And woman is—no matter ! Go, my lord !

We did not mean to wound thee. So, forget it !

Woo when thou wilt—and wear what thou canst win.

Lau. My gracious liege, Lauzun commends him to thee ;

And if one word, he merit not, may wound him,

He'll think of favours words can never cancel.

Memory shall med'cine to his present pain.

God save you, sire !—[*Aside*] to be the dupe I deem you !

[*Exit LAUZUN.*

Louis. I love her not ; and yet, methinks, am jealous !

Lauzun is wise and witty—knows the sex ;

What if she do ?—No ! I will not believe it.

And what is she to me ?—a friend—a friend !

And I would have her wed. 'Twere best for both--

A balm for conscience—an excuse for change !

'Twere best :—I marvel much if she'll accept him !

[*Exit LOUIS.*

SCENE II.

A Private Apartment in the Palace of the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Enter the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Duch. de la Vall. He loves me, then, no longer ! All
the words

Earth knows shape but one thought—"He loves no
longer !"

Where shall I turn ? My mother—my poor mother !

Sleeps the long sleep ! 'Tis better so ! Her life

Ran to its lees. I will not mourn for her.

But it is hard to be alone on earth !

This love, for which I gave so much, is dead,

Save in my heart ; and love, surviving love,

Changes its nature, and becomes despair !

Ah, me !—ah, me ! how hateful is this world !

Enter Gentleman of the Chamber.

Gent. The Duke de Lauzun !

Duch. de la Vall. News, sweet news, of Louis !

Enter LAUZUN.

Lau. Dare I disturb your thoughts ?

Duch. de la Vall. My lord, you're welcome !

Came you from court to-day ?

Lau. I left the king

But just now, in the gardens.

Duch. de la Vall. [*eagerly*]. Well !

Lau. He bore him

With his accustom'd health

Duch. de la Vall.

Proceed.

Lau.

Dear lady,

I have no more to tell.

Duch. de la Vall. [aside]. Alas ! *No message !**Lau.* We did converse, 'tis true, upon a subject
Most dear to one of us. Your grace divines it ?*Duch. de la Vall. [joyfully].* Was it of *me* he spoke ?*Lau.*

Of you

I spoke, and *he* replied. I praised your beauty—*Duch. de la Vall.* You praised !*Lau.*Your form, your face—that wealth of mind
Which, play'd you not the miser, and conceal'd it,
Would buy up all the coins that pass for wit.
The king, assenting, wish'd he might behold you
As happy—as your virtues should have made you.*Duch. de la Vall.* 'Twas said in mockery !*Lau.*

Lady, no !—in kindness.

Nay, more (he added), would you yet your will
Mould to his wish—*Duch. de la Vall.* His wish !—the lightest !*Lau.*

Ah !

You know not how my heart throbs while you speak !
Be not so rash to promise ; or, at least,
Be faithful to perform !*Duch. de la Vall.*

You speak in riddles.

Lau. Of your lone state and beautiful affections,
Form'd to make Home an Eden, our good king,
Tenderly mindful, fain would see you link
Your lot to one whose love might be your shelter.
He spake, and all my long-conceal'd emotions
Gush'd into words, and I confess'd—O lady,
Hear me confess once more—how well I love thee !

Duch. de la Vall. You dared?—and *he*—the king—

Lau.

Upon me smiled,

And bade me prosper.

Duch. de la Vall. Ah!

[*Sinks down, and covers her face with her hands.*]

Lau.

Nay, nay, look up!

The heart that could forsake a love like thine

Doth not deserve regret. Look up, dear lady!

Duch. de la Vall. He bade thee prosper!

Lau.

Pardon! My wild hope

Outran discretion.

Duch. de la Vall. Louis bade thee prosper!

Lau. Ah, if this thankless—this remorseless love

Thou couldst forget! Oh, give me but thy friendship,

And take respect, faith, worship, all, in Lauzun!

Duch. de la Vall. Consign me to another! Well, 'tis well!

Earth's latest tie is broke!—earth's hopes are over!

Lau. Speak to me, sweet Louise!

Duch. de la Vall.

So, thou art he

To whom this shatter'd heart should be surrender'd?—

And thou, the high-born, glittering, scornful Lauzun,

Wouldst take the cast-off leman of a king,

Nor think thyself disgraced! Fie!—fie! thou'rt shameless!

Lau. You were betray'd by love, and not by sin,

Nor low ambition. Your disgrace is honour

By the false side of dames the world calls spotless.

Duch. de la Vall. Go, sir, nor make me scorn you. If I've err'd,

I know, at least, the majesty of virtue,

And feel—what you forget.

Lau. Yet hear me, madam !

Duch. de la Vall. Go, go ! You are the king's friend—
you were mine ;

I would not have you thus debased—refused

By one at once the fallen and forsaken !

His friend shall not be shamed so !

[*Exit the DUCH. DE LA VALLIÈRE.*

Lau. [*passing his hand over his eyes*]. I do swear
These eyes are moist ! And he who own'd this gem
Casts it away, and cries "divine" to tinsel !
So falls my hope. My fortunes call me back
To surer schemes. Before that ray of goodness
How many plots shrunk, blinded, into shadow !
Lauzun forgot himself, and dreamt of virtue !

[*Exit LAUZUN.*



SCENE III.

Gentleman of the Chamber, and BRAGELONE, as a
Franciscan friar.

Gent. The duchess gone ! I fear me that, to-day.
You are too late for audience, reverend father.

Brage. Audience !—a royal phrase !—it suits the
duchess.

Go, son ; announce me.

Gent. By what name, my father ?

Brage. I've done with names. Announce a nameless
monk,

Whose prayers have risen o'er some graves she honours.

Gent. [*aside*]. My lady is too lavish of her bounty

To these proud shavelings : yet, methinks, this friar
 Hath less of priest than warrior in his bearing.
 He awes me with his stern and thrilling voice,
 His stately gesture, and imperious eye.
 And yet, I swear, he comes for alms !—the varlet !
 Why should I heed him ?

Brage.

Didst thou hear ? Begone !

[*Exit Gentleman.*]

Yes, she will know me not. My lealest soldier,
 One who had march'd, bare-breasted, on the steel,
 If I had bid him cast away the treasure
 Of the o'er-valued life ; the nurse that rear'd me,
 Or mine own mother, in these shroudlike robes,
 And in the immature and rapid age
 Which, from my numb'd and withering heart, hath crept
 Unto my features, now might gaze upon me,
 And pass the stranger by. Why should she know me,
 If they who loved me know not ? Hark ! I hear her :
 That silver footfall !—still it hath to me
 Its own peculiar and most spiritual music,
 Trembling along the pulses of the air,
 And dying on the heart that makes its echo !
 'Tis she ! How lovely yet !

Enter the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Duch. de la Vall.

Your blessing, father.

Brage. Let courts and courtiers bless the favour'd
 duchess :

Courts bless the proud ; Heaven's ministers, the humble.

Duch. de la Vall. He taunts me, this poor friar ! Well,
 my father,

I have obey'd your summons. Do you seek

Masses for souls departed ?—or the debt
The wealthy owe the poor ?—say on !

Brage. [*aside*]. Her heart
Is not yet harden'd ! Daughter, such a mission
Were sweeter than the task which urged me hither :
You had a lover once—a plain, bold soldier ;
He loved you well !

Duch. de la Vall. Ah, Heaven !

Brage. And you forsook him.
Your choice was natural—some might call it noble !
And this blunt soldier pardon'd the *desertion*,
But sunk at what his folly term'd *dishonour*.

Duch. de la Vall. O father, spare me !—if dishonour
were,
It rested but with me.

Brage. So deem'd the world,
But not that foolish soldier !—he had learn'd
To blend his thoughts, his fame, *himself*, with thee ;
Thou wert a purer, a diviner self ;
He loved thee as a warrior worships glory ;
He loved thee as a Roman honour'd virtue ;
He loved thee as thy sex adore ambition ;
And when Pollution breathed upon his idol,
It blasted glory, virtue, and ambition,
Fill'd up each crevice in the world of thought,
And poison'd earth with thy contagious shame !

Duch. de la Vall. Spare me ! in mercy, spare me !

Brage. This poor fool,
This shadow, living only on thy light,
When thou wert darken'd, could but choose to die.
He left the wars ; no fame, since *thine* was dim :
He left his land ;—what home without Louise ?

It broke—that stubborn, stern, unbending heart—
It broke! and, breaking, its last sigh—forgave thee!

Duch. de la Vall. And I live on!

Brage. One eve, methinks, he told me,
Thy hand around his hauberk wound a scarf;
And thy voice bade him “Wear it for the sake
Of one who honour’d worth!” Were those the words?

Duch. de la Vall. They were. Alas! alas!

Brage. He wore, it lady,
Till memory ceased. It was to him the token
Of a sweet dream; and, from his quiet grave,
He sends it now to thee.—Its hues are faded.

Duch. de la Vall. Give it me!—let me bathe it with
my tears!

Memorial of my guilt—

Brage. [*in a soft and tender accent*]. And his forgive-
ness!

Duch. de la Vall. That tone! ha! while thou speakest,
in thy voice,
And in thy presence, there is something kindred
To him we jointly mourn: thou art—

Brage. His brother:
Of whom, perchance, in ancient years he told thee;
Who, early wearied of this garish world,
Fled to the convent-shade, and found repose.

Duch. de la Vall. [*approaching*]. Ay, is it so?—thou’rt
Bragelone’s brother?

Why, then, thou art what *he* would be, if living—
A friend to one most friendless!

Brage. Friendless—Ay,
Thou hast learnt, betimes, the truth, that man’s wild
passion

Makes but its sport of virtue, peace, affection ;
And breaks the plaything when the game is done !
Friendless !—I pity thee !

Duch. de la Vall. Oh ! holy father,
Stay with me !—succour me !—reprove, but guide me :
Teach me to wean my thoughts from earth to heaven,
And be what God ordain'd his chosen priests—
Foes to our sin, but friends to our despair.

Brage. Daughter, a heavenly and a welcome duty,
But one most rigid and austere : there is
No composition with our debts of sin.
God claims thy soul ; and, lo ! his creature there !
Thy choice must be between them—God or man,
Virtue or guilt ; a Louis or—

Duch. de la Vall. A Louis !
Not mine the poor atonement of the choice ;
I am, myself, the Abandon'd One !

Brage. I know it ;
Therefore my mission and my ministry.
When he who loved thee died, he bade me wait
The season when the sicklied blight of change
Creeps o'er the bloom of Passion, when the way
Is half prepared by Sorrow to Repentance,
And seek you then,—*he* trusted not in vain :
Perchance an idle hope, but it consoled him.

Duch. de la Vall. No, no !—not idle !—in my happiest
hours,

When the world smiled, a void was in this heart
The world could never fill : thy brother knew me !

Brage. I do believe thee, daughter. Hear me yet ;
My mission is not ended. When thy mother
Lay on the bed of death (she went before

The sterner heart the same blow broke more slowly),—
As thus she lay, around the swimming walls
Her dim eyes wander'd, searching through the shadows,
As if the spirit, half-redeem'd from clay,
Could force its will to shape, and, from the darkness,
Body a daughter's image—(nay, be still !)
Thou wert not there ;—alas ! thy shame had murder'd
Even the blessed sadness of that duty !
But o'er that pillow watch'd a sleepless eye,
And by that couch moved one untiring step,
And o'er that suffering rose a ceaseless prayer ;
And still thy mother's voice, whene'er it call'd
Upon a daughter—found a son !

Duch. de la Vall.

O Heaven !

Have mercy on me !

Brage.

Coldly through the lattice

Gleam'd the slow dawn, and, from their latest sleep,
Woke the sad eyes it was not *thine* to close !
And, as they fell upon the haggard brow,
And the thin hairs—grown grey, but not by Time—
Of that lone watcher—while upon her heart
Gush'd all the memories of the mighty wrecks
Thy guilt had made of what were once the shrines
For Honour, Peace, and God !—that aged woman
(She was a hero's wife) upraised her voice
To curse her child !

Duch. de la Vall.

Go on !—be kind, and kill me !

Brage. Then he, whom thoughts of what he *was* to *thee*

Had made her son, arrested on her lips
The awful doom, and, from the earlier past,
Invoked a tenderer spell—a holier image !
Painted thy gentle, soft, obedient childhood—

Thy guileless youth, lone state, and strong temptation ;
Thy very sin the overflow of thoughts
From wells whose source was innocence ; and thus
Sought, with the sunshine of thy maiden spring,
To melt the ice that lay upon her heart,
Till all the mother flow'd again !

Duch. de la Vall.

And she !

Brage. Spoke only once again ! She died—and *bless'd*
thee !

Duch. de la Vall. [*rushing out*]. No more !—I *can* no
no more !—my heart is breaking !

Brage. The angel hath not left her !—if the plumes
Have lost the whiteness of their younger glory,
The wings have still the instinct of the skies,
And yet shall bear her up !

Louis [*without*]. We need you not, sir ;
Ourself will seek the duchess.

Brage.

The king's voice !

How my flesh creeps !—my foe, and her destroyer !
The ruthless, heartless—

[*His hand seeks rapidly and mechanically for his sword-hilt.*

Why, why !—where's my sword ?

O Lord ! I do forget myself to dotage :

The soldier, now, is a poor helpless monk,

That hath not even curses. Satan, hence !

Get thee behind me, Tempter !—There, I'm calm.

SCENE IV.

LOUIS *and* BRAGELONE.

Louis. I can no more hold parley with impatience,
But long to learn how Lauzun's courtship prospers.
She is not here. At prayers, perhaps. The duchess
Hath grown devout. A friar!—Save you, father!

Brage. I thank thee, son.

Louis. He knows me not. Well,
monk,

Are you her grace's almoner?

Brage. Sire, no!

Louis. So short, yet know us?

Brage. Sire, I do. You are

The man—

Louis. How, priest!—the man!

Brage. The word offends you?

The king, who raised a maiden to a duchess.

That maiden's father was a gallant subject:

Kingly reward!—you made his daughter duchess.

That maiden's mother was a stainless matron:

Her heart you broke, though mother to a duchess!

That maiden was affianced from her youth

To one who served you well—nay, saved your life:

His life you robb'd of all that gave life value;

And yet—you made his fair betroth'd a duchess!

You are that king. The world proclaims you "Great;"

A million warriors bled to buy your laurels;

A million peasants starved to build Versailles :
Your people famish ; but your court is splendid !
Priests from the pulpit bless your glorious reign ;
Poets have sung you greater than Augustus ;
And painters placed you on immortal canvass,
Limn'd as the Jove whose thunders awe the world :
But to the humble minister of Heaven,
You are the king who has betray'd his trust—
Beggar'd a nation but to bloat a court,
Seen in men's lives the pastime to ambition,
Look'd but on virtue as the toy for vice ;
And, for the first time, from a subject's lips,
Now learns the name he leaves to Time and God !

Louis. Add to the bead-roll of that king's offences,
That when a foul-mouth'd monk assumed the rebel,
The monster-king forgave him. Hast thou done ?

Brage. Your changing hues belie your royal mien ;
Ill the high monarch veils the trembling man !

Louis. Well, you are privileged ! It ne'er was said
The Fourteenth Louis, in his proudest hour,
Bow'd not his sceptre to the Church's crozier.

Brage. Alas ! *the Church !* 'Tis true, this garb of serge
Dares speech that daunts the ermine, and walks free
Where stout hearts tremble in the triple mail.
But wherefore ?—Lies the virtue in the robe,
Which the moth eats ? or in these senseless beads ?
Or in the name of Priest ? The Pharisees
Had priests that gave their Saviour to the cross !
No ! we have high immunity and sanction,
That Truth may teach humanity to Power,
Glide through the dungeon, pierce the armed throng,
Awaken Luxury on her Sybarite couch,

And, startling souls that slumber on a throne,
Bow kings before that priest of priests—THE CONSCIENCE !

Louis [aside]. An awful man !—unlike the reverend
crew

Who praise my royal virtues in the pulpit,
And—ask for bishoprics when church is over !

Brage. This makes us sacred. The profane are they
Honouring the herald while they scorn the mission.
The king who serves the Church, yet clings to Mammon ;
Who fears the pastor, but forgets the flock ;
Who bows before the monitor, and yet
Will ne'er forego the sin, may sink, when age
Palsies the lust and deadens the temptation,
To the priest-ridden, not repentant, dotard,—
For pious hopes hail superstitious terrors,
And seek some sleet Iscariot of the *Church*,
To sell salvation for the thirty pieces !

Louis [aside]. He speaks as one inspired !

Brage.

Awake !—awake !

Great though thou art, awake thee from the dream
That earth was made for kings—mankind for slaughter—
Woman for lust—the people for the palace !
Dark warnings have gone forth ; along the air
Lingers the crash of the first Charles's throne !
Behold the young, the fair, the haughty king !
The kneeling courtiers, and the flattering priests ;
Lo ! where the palace rose, behold the scaffold—
The crowd—the axe—the headsman—and the victim !
Lord of the silver lilies, canst thou tell
If the same fate await not thy descendant !
If some meek son of thine imperial line
May make no brother to yon headless spectre !

And when the sage who saddens o'er the end
Tracks back the causes, tremble, lest he find
The seeds, thy wars, thy pomp, and thy profusion
Sow'd in a heartless court and breadless people,
Grew to the tree from which men shaped the scaffold,—
And the long glare of thy funereal glories
Light unborn monarchs to a ghastly grave !
Beware, proud King ! the Present cries aloud,
A prophet to the future ! Wake !—beware !

[*Exit* BRAGELONE.

Louis. Gone ! Most ill-omen'd voice and fearful shape !
Scarce seem'd it of the earth ; a thing that breathed
But to fulfil some dark and dire behest ;
To appal us, and to vanish.—The quick blood
Halts in my veins. Oh ! never till this hour
Heard I the voice that awed the soul of Louis,
Or met one brow that did not quail before
My kingly gaze ! And this unmitred monk !
I'm glad that none were by.—It was a dream ;
So let its memory like a dream depart.
I am no tyrant—nay, I love my people.
My wars were made but for the fame of France !
My pomp ! why, tush !—what king can play the
hermit ?

My conscience smites me not ; and but last eve
I did confess, and was absolved !—A bigot ;
And half, methinks, a heretic ! I wish
The Jesuits had the probing of his doctrines.
Well, well, 'tis o'er !—What ho, there !

Enter Gentleman of the Chamber.

Louis.

Wine ! Apprise

Once more the duchess of our presence.—Stay !

Yon monk, what doth he here ?

Gent.

I know not, sire,

Nor saw him till this day.

Louis.

Strange !—Wine !

[*Exit Gentleman.*]



SCENE V.

DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE *and* LOUIS.

Louis.

Well, madam,

We've tarried long your coming, and meanwhile

Have found your proxy in a madman monk,

Whom, for the future, we would pray you spare us.

Re-enter Gentleman with wine.

So, so ! the draught restores us. Fair La Vallière,

Make not yon holy man your confessor ;

You'll find small comfort in his lectures.

Duch. de la Vall.

Sire,

His meaning is more kindly than his manner.

I pray you, pardon him.

Louis.

Ay, ay ! No more ;

Let's think of him no more. You had, this morn,

A courtlier visitant, methinks—De Lauzun ?

Duch. de la Vall.

Yes, sire.

Louis.

A smooth and gallant gentleman.

You're silent. Silence is assent ; 'tis well !

Duch. de la Vall. [aside]. Down, my full heart ! The
duke declares your wish

Is that—that I should bind this broken heart
And—no ! I cannot speak—

[*With great and sudden energy.*]

You wish me wed, sire ?

Louis. 'Twere best that you should wed ; and yet, De
Lauzun

Is scarce the happiest choice.—But as thou wilt.

Duch. de la Vall. “ 'Twere best that I should wed ! ”—
thou saidst it, Louis ;

Say it once more !

Louis. In honesty, I think so.

Duch. de la Vall. My choice is made, then—I obey the
fiat,

And will become a bride !

Louis. The duke has sped !

I trust he loves thyself, and not thy dower.

Duch. de la Vall. The duke ! what, hast thou read so
ill this soul

That thou couldst deem thus meanly of that book
Whose every page was bared to thee ? A bitter
Lot has been mine—and this sums up the measure.

Go, Louis ! go !—All glorious as thou art—
Earth's Agamemnon—the great king of men—
Thou wert not worthy of this woman's heart !

Louis. Her passion moves me !—Then your choice has
fallen

Upon a nobler bridegroom ?

Duch. de la Vall. Sire, it hath !

Louis. May I demand that choice.

Duch. de la Vall. Too soon thou'lt learn it.

Not yet ! Ah me !

Louis. Nay, sigh not, my sweet duchess.

Speak not so sadly. What though love hath past,
Friendship remains ; and still my fondest hope
Is to behold thee happy. Come !—thy hand ;
Let us be friends ! We are so !

Duch. de la Vall.

Friends !—no more !

So, it hath come to this ! I am contented !

Yes—we are friends !

Louis.

And when your choice is made,
You will permit your friend to hail your bridals ?

Duch. de la Vall. Ay, when my choice is made !

Louis.

This poor De Lauzun

Hath then no chance ? I'm glad of it, and thus
Seal our new bond of friendship on your hand.

Adieu !—and Heaven protect you !

[*Exit LOUIS.*

Duch. de la Vall. [*gazing after him*]. Heaven hath
heard thee ;

And in this last most cruel, but most gracious,
Proof of thy coldness, breaks the lingering chain
That bound my soul to earth.

Enter BRAGELONE.

O holy father !

Brother to him whose grave my guilt prepared,
Witness my firm resolve, support my struggles,
And guide me back to Virtue through Repentance !

Brage. Pause, ere thou dost decide.

Duch. de la Vall.

I've paused too long

And now, impatient of this weary load,
Sigh for repose.

Brage.

O Heaven, receive her back !

Through the wide earth, the sorrowing dove hath flown,

And found no haven ; weary though her wing
And sullied with the dust of lengthen'd travail,
Now let her flee away and be at rest !

The peace that man has broken—THOU restore,
Whose holiest name is FATHER !

Duch. de la Vall.

Hear us, Heaven.



ACT V.—SCENE I.

The Gardens at Versailles.

*Enter MADAME DE MONTESPAN, GRAMMONT, and
Courtiers.*

Mme. de Mon. So she has fled from court—the saintly
duchess ;

A convent's grate must shield this timorous virtue.

Methinks they're not so many to assail it !

Well, trust me, one short moon of fast and penance

Will bring us back the recreant novice——

Gram.

And

End the eventful comedy by marriage.

Lauzun against the world were even odds ;

But Lauzun *with* the world—what saint can stand it ?

Mme. de Mon. [aside]. Lauzun !—the traitor ! What !
to give my rival

The triumph to reject the lawful love

Of him whose lawless passion first betray'd me !

Gram. Talk of the devil ! Humph—you know the
proverb.

Enter LAUZUN.

Lau. Good day, my friends. Your pardon, madam ; I Thought 'twas the sun that blinded me.—[*Aside.*] Athenè ! Pray you a word.

Mme. de Mon. [*aloud, and turning away disdainfully*].

We are not at leisure, duke.

Lau. Ha ! [*aside*]. Nay, Athenè, spare your friend these graces.

Forget your state one moment ; have you ask'd

The king the office that you undertook

To make my own ? My creditors are urgent.

Mme. de Mon. [*aloud*]. No, my lord duke, I have not ask'd the king !

I grieve to hear your fortunes are so broken,

And that your honour'd and august device,

To mend them by your marriage, fail'd.

Gram.

She hits him

Hard on the hip. Ha, ha !—the poor De Lauzun !

Lau. Sir !—Nay, I'm calm !

Mme. de Mon.

Pray, may we dare to ask

How long you've loved the duchess ?

Lau.

Ever since

You were her friend and confidante.

Mme. de Mon.

You're bitter.

Perchance you deem your love a thing to boast of.

Lau. To boast of !—Yes ! 'Tis something ev'n to love The only woman Louis ever honour'd !

Mme. de Mon. [*laying her hand on LAUZUN'S arm*]. Insolent ! You shall rue this ! If I speak

Your name to Louis, coupled with a favour,

The suit shall be your banishment !

[*Exit MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*]

First Courtier.

Let's follow.

Ha ! ha !—Dear duke, your game, I fear, is lost !
 You've play'd the knave, and thrown away the king.

Courtiers. Ha ! ha !—Adieu ! [*Exeunt.*

Lau. Ha ! ha !—The devil take you !

So, she would ruin me ! Fore-arm'd—fore-warn'd !
 I have the king's ear yet, and know some secrets
 That could destroy her ! Since La Vallière's flight,
 Louis grows sad and thoughtful, and looks cold
 On her vain rival, who too coarsely shows
 The world the stuff court ladies' hearts are made of.
 She will undo herself—and I will help her.
 Weave on thy web, false Montespan, weave on ;
 The bigger spider shall devour the smaller.
 The war's declared—'tis clear that one must fall :—
 I'll be polite—the *lady* to the wall !

[*Exit LAUZUN.*

SCENE II.

Sunset—the old Chateau of La Vallière—the Convent of the Carmelites at a distance—the same scene as that with which the play opens.

*Enter the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE and BRAGELONE
 from the Chateau.*

Duch. de la Vall. Once more, ere yet I take farewell of
 earth,

I see mine old, familiar, maiden home !

All how unchanged !—The same the hour, the scene,
 The very season of the year !—the stillness

Of the smooth wave—the stillness of the trees,
 Where the winds sleep like dreams !—and, oh ! the calm
 Of the blue heavens around yon holy spires,
 Pointing, like gospel truths, through calm and storm,
 To man's great home !

Brage. [*aside*]. Oh ! how the years recede !
 Upon this spot I spoke to her of love,
 And dreamt of bliss for earth ! [*The vesper-bell tolls.*]

Duch. de la Vall. Hark ! the deep sound,
 That seems a voice from some invisible spirit,
 Claiming the world for God.—When last I heard it
 Hallow this air, here stood my mother, living ;
 And I—was then a mother's *pride* !—and yonder
 Came thy brave brother in his glittering mail ;
 And—ah ! these thoughts are bitter !—were he living,
 How would he scorn them !

Brage. [*who has been greatly agitated*]. No !—ah, no !—
 thou wrong'st him !

Duch. de la Vall. Yet, were he living, could I but receive
 From his own lips my pardon, and his blessing,
 My soul would deem one dark memorial rased
 Out of the page most blister'd with its tears !

Brage. Then have thy wish ! and in these wrecks of man
 Worn to decay, and rent by many a storm,
 Survey the worm the world call'd Bragelone.

Duch. de la Vall. Avaunt !—avaunt !—I dream !—the
 dead return'd
 To earth to mock me !—No ! this hand is warm !
 I have one murder less upon my soul.
 I thank thee, Heaven !—[*swoons*].

Brage. [*supporting her*]. The blow strikes home ; and yet
 What is my life to her ? Louise !—She moves not ;

She does not breathe ; how still she sleeps ! I saw her
Sleep in her mother's arms, and then, in sleep
She smiled. *There's no smile now !*—poor child ! One kiss !
It is a brother's kiss—it has no guilt ;
Kind Heaven, it has no guilt.—I have survived
All earthlier thoughts : her crime, my vows, effaced them.
A brother's kiss !—Away ! I'm human still ;
I thought I had been stronger ; God forgive me !
Awake, Louise !—awake ! She breathes once more ;
The spell is broke ; the marble warms to life !
And I—freeze back to stone !

Duch. de la Vall.

I heard a voice

That cried “ Louise ! ”—Speak, speak !—my sense is dim,
And struggles darkly with a blessed ray
That shot from heaven.—My shame hath not destroy'd
thee !

Brage. No !—life might yet serve *thee* !—and I lived on,
Dead to all else. I took the vows, and then,
Ere yet I laid me down, and bade the Past
Fade like a ghost before the dawn of heaven,
One sacred task was left.—If love was dust,
Love, like ourselves, hath an immortal soul,
That doth survive whate'er it takes from clay ;
And that—the holier part of love—became
A thing to watch thy steps—a guardian spirit
To hover round, disguised, unknown, undream'd of,
To soothe the sorrow, to redeem the sin,
And lead thy soul to peace !

Duch. de la Vall.

O bright revenge !

Love strong as death, and nobler far than woman's !

Brage. To *peace*—ah, let me deem so !—the mute
cloister,

The spoken ritual, and the solemn veil,
Are nought themselves ;—the Huguenot abjures
The monkish cell, but breathes, perchance, the prayer
That speeds as quick to the Eternal Throne !
In our own souls must be the solitude ;
In our own thoughts the sanctity !—'Tis *then*
The feeling that our vows have built the wall
Passion can storm not, nor temptation sap,
Gives calm its charter, roots out wild regret,
And makes the heart the world-disdaining cloister.
This—this is peace ! but pause, if in thy breast
Linger the wish of earth. Alas ! all oaths
Are vain, if nature shudders to record them—
The subtle spirit 'scapes the sealèd vessel !
The false devotion is the true despair !

Duch. de la Vall. Fear not !—I feel 'tis not the walls of
stone,

Told beads, nor murmur'd hymns, that bind the heart,
Or exorcise the world ; the spell's the thought
That where most weak we've banish'd the temptation,
And reconciled, what earth would still divide,
The human memories and the immortal conscience.

Brage. Doubt fades before thine accents. On the day
That gives thee to the veil we'll meet once more.
Let mine be man's last blessing in this world.
Oh ! tell me then, thou'rt happier than thou hast been ;
And when we part, I'll seek some hermit cell
Beside the walls that compass thee, and prayer,
Morning and night, shall join our souls in heaven.

Duch. de la Vall. Yes, generous spirit ! think not that
my future

Shall be repining as the past. Thou livest,

And conscience smiles again. The shatter'd bark
Glides to its haven. Joy ! the land is near.

[*Exit DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE into the Chateau.*

Brage. So, it is past !—the secret is disclosed !
The hand she did reject on earth has led her
To holier ties. I have not lived in vain !
Yet who had dream'd, when through the ranks of war
Went the loud shout of "France and Bragelone !"
That the monk's cowl would close on all my laurels ?
A never-heard philosopher is life !—
Our happiest hours are sleep's ;—and sleep proclaims,
Did we but listen to its warning voice,
That REST is earth's elixir. Why, then, pine
That, ere our years grow feverish with their toil,
Too weary-worn to find the rest they sigh for,
We learn betimes THE MORAL OF REPOSE ?
I will lie down, and sleep away this world.
The pause of care, the slumber of tired passion,
Why, why defer till night is well-nigh spent ?
When the brief sun that gilt the landscape sets,
When o'er the music on the leaves of life
Chill silence falls, and every fluttering hope
That voiced the world with song has gone to rest,
Then let thy soul, from the poor labourer, learn
"Sleep's sweetest taken soonest !"

[*As he moves away, his eye falls upon a glove dropped by the
DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE—he takes it up.*

And this hath touch'd her hand !—it were a comfort
To hoard a single relic !

[*Kisses the glove, and then suddenly dropping it.*

No !—'Tis sinful !

[*Exit BRAGELONE.*

SCENE III.

The exterior of the Gothic Convent of the Carmelites—The windows illumined—Music heard from within—A crowd without—Enter Courtiers, Ladies, Priests, &c., and pass through the door of the chapel, in the centre of the building.

Enter LAUZUN from a door in the side wing of the Convent—to him, GRAMMONT.

Lau. Where hast thou left the king?

Gram. Not one league hence.

Lau. Ere the clock strikes, La Vallière takes the veil.

Gram. Great Heaven ! so soon !—and Louis sent me on,
To learn how thou hadst prosper'd with the duchess.
He is so sanguine—this imperious king,
Who never heard a “No” from living lips !
How did she take his letter ?

Lau. In sad silence ;
Then mused a little while, and some few tears
Stole down her cheeks, as, with a trembling hand,
She gave me back the scroll.

Gram. You mean her answer.

Lau. No ; the king's letter. “Tell him that I thank him ;”

(Such were her words ;) ‘but that my choice is made ;
And ev'n this last assurance of his love
I dare not keep : 'tis only when I pray,
That I may think of him. This is my answer”

Gram. No more ?—no written word ?

Lau. None, Grammont. Then

She rose and left me ; and I heard the bell
Calling the world to see a woman scorn it.

Gram. The king will never brook it. He will grasp
her

Back from this yawning tomb of living souls.
The news came on him with such sudden shock ;
The long noviciate thus abridged ! and she—
Ever so waxen to his wayward will !—
She cannot yet be marble.

Lau. Wrong'd affection
Makes many a Niobe from tears. Haste, Grammont,
Back to the king, and bid him fly to save,
Or nerve his heart to lose, her. I will follow,—
My *second* charge fulfill'd.

Gram. And what is that ?

Lau. Revenge and justice !—Go !

[*Exit* GRAMMONT.]

Lau. [*looking down the stage*]. I hear her laugh—
I catch the glitter of her festive robe !
Athenè comes to triumph—and to tremble !

SCENE IV.

MADAME DE MONTESPAN, Courtiers, and LAUZUN.

Mme. de Mon. [*aside*]. Now for the crowning cup of
sparkling fortune !

A rarer pearl than Egypt's queen dissolved
I have immersed in that delicious draught,

A woman's triumph o'er a fairer rival !

[As she turns to enter the convent, she perceives LAUZUN.]

What ! you here, duke !

Lau.

Ay, madam ; I've not yet

To thank you for—my banishment !

Mme. de Mon.

The Ides

Of March are come—not over !

Lau.

Are they not ?

For some they may be ! You are here to witness—

Mme. de Mon. My triumph !

Lau.

And to take a *friend's* condolence.

I bear this letter from the king !

Mme. de Mon.

The king ?

[Reads the letter.]

“We do not blame you ; blame belongs to love,

And love had nought with you.”—What ! what ! I
tremble !

“The Duke de Lauzun, of these lines the bearer,

Confirms their purport : from our royal court

We do excuse your presence.” Banish'd, duke ?

Is that the word ?—What, banish'd !

Lau.

Hush !—you mar

The holy silence of the place. 'Tis true ;

You read aright. Our gracious king permits you

To quit Versailles. Versailles is not the world.

Mme. de Mon. Perdition !—banish'd !

Lau.

You can take the veil.

Meanwhile, enjoy *your triumph* !

Mme. de Mon.

Triumph !—Ah !

She triumphs o'er me to the last. My soul

Finds hell on earth—and hers makes earth a heaven !

Lau. Hist !—will you walk within ?

Mme. de Mon.

O, hateful world !

What ?—hath it come to this ?

Lau.

You spoil your triumph !

Mme. de Mon. Lauzun, I thank thee—thank thee—
thank—and curse thee.[*Exit MADAME DE MONTESPAN.**Lau. [looking after her with a subdued laugh].* Ha,
ha !—the *broken* heart can know no pangLike that which racks the *bad* heart when its sting
Poisons itself. Now, then, away to Louis.

The bell still tolls : there's time. This soft La Vallière !

The only thing that ever baffled Lauzun,

And felt not his revenge !—revenge, poor soul !

Revenge upon a dove !—she shall be saved

From the pale mummies of yon Memphian vault,

Or the great Louis will be less than man,—

Or that fond sinner will be more than woman.

[*Exit LAUZUN.*

SCENE V.

The interior of the Chapel of the Carmelite Convent—On the foreground, Courtiers, Ladies, &c.—At the back of the stage, the altar, only partially seen through the surrounding throng—The officials pass to and fro, swinging the censers—The stage darkened—Lights suspended along the aisle, and tapers by the altar.

As the scene opens, solemn music, to which is chaunted the following

HYMN.

Come from the world, O weary soul,
For run the race and near the goal !

Flee from the net, O lonely dove,
 Thy nest is built the clouds above !
 Turn, wild and worn with panting fear,
 And slake thy thirst, thou wounded deer,
 In Jordan's holy springs !

Arise ! O fearful soul, arise !
 For broke the chain and calm the skies !
 As moths fly upward to the star,
 The light allures thee from afar.
 Though earth is lost, and space is wide,
 The smile of God shall be thy guide,
 And Faith and Hope thy wings !

[*As the Hymn ends, BRAGELONE enters, and stands apart in the background.*]

First Cour. Three minutes more, and earth has lost
 La Vallière !

Second Cour. So young !—so fair !

Third Cour. 'Twas whisper'd, that the king
 Would save her yet !

First Cour. What ! snatch her from the altar ?
 He durst not, man !

Enter LOUIS, GRAMMONT, and LAUZUN.

Louis. Hold ! we forbid the rites !

[*As the King advances hastily up the aisle, BRAGELONE places himself before him.*]

Back monk ! revere the presence of the king !

Brage. And thou the palace of the King of kings !

Louis. Dotard ! we claim our subject.

Brage. She hath past

The limit of your realm. Ye priests of Heaven,
 Complete your solemn task !—The church's curse
 Hangs on the air. Descendant of Saint Louis,
 Move—and the avalanche falls !

[*The DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE, still dressed in the bridal and gorgeous attire assumed before the taking of the veil, descends from the altar.*

Duch. de la Vall.

No, holy friend !

I need it not ; my soul is my protector.

Nay, thou mayst trust me.

Brage. [*after a pause*]. Thou art right.—I trust thee ?

Louis [*leading the Duch. de la Vallière to the front of the stage*]. Thou hast not ta'en the veil ?—Ev'n Time had mercy.

Thou art saved !—thou art saved !—to love—to life !

Duch. de la Vall.

Ah, sire !

Louis. Call me not sire !—forget that dreary time
When thou wert duchess, and myself the king.
Fly back, fly back, to those delicious hours
When *I* was but thy lover and thy Louis !
And thou my dream—my bird—my fairy flower—
My violet, shrinking in the modest shade
Until transplanted to this breast—to haunt
The common air with odours ! Oh, Louise !
Hear me !—the fickle lust of change allured me,
The pride thy virtues wounded arm'd against thee,
Until I dream'd I loved thyself no longer ;
But now this dread resolve, this awe of parting,
Re-binds me to thee—bares my soul before me—
Dispels the lying mists that veil'd thine image,
And tells me that I never loved but thee !

Duch. de la Vall. I am not then despised !—thou lov'st me still !

And when I pray for thee, my heart may feel
That it hath nothing to forgive !

Louis.

Louise !

Thou dost renounce this gloomy purpose ?

Duch. de la Vall.

Never !

It is not gloomy !—think'st thou it is gloom

To feel that, as my soul becomes more pure,

Heaven will more kindly listen to the prayers

That rise for *thee* ?—is that thought *gloom*, my Louis ?*Louis.* Oh ! slay me not with tenderness ! Return !

And if thy conscience startle at my love,

Be still my friend—my angel !

Duch. de la Vall.

I am weak,

But, in the knowledge of my weakness, strong !

I could not breathe the air that's sweet with thee,

Nor cease to love !—in flight my only safety ;

And were that flight not made by solemn vows

Eternal, it were bootless ; for the wings

Of my wild soul know but two bournes to speed to—

Louis and Heaven ! And, oh ! in Heaven at last

My soul, unsinning, may unite with Louis !

Louis. I do implore thee !—*Duch. de la Vall.*

No ; thou canst not tempt me !

My heart already is the nun.

Louis.

Thou know'st not

I have dismiss'd thy rival from the court.

Return !—though mine no more, at least thy Louis

Shall know no second love !

Duch. de la Vall.

What ! wilt thou, Louis,

Renounce for me eternally my rival,

And live alone for——

Louis.

Thee ! Louise, I swear it !

Duch. de la Vall. [*raising her arms to Heaven*]. Father !

at length, I dare to hope for pardon,

For now remorse may prove itself sincere !
Bear witness, Heaven ! I never loved this man
So well as now ! and never seem'd *his* love
Built on so sure a rock ! Upon thine altar
I lay the offering. I revoke the past ;
For Louis, Heaven was left—and now I leave
Louis, when tenfold more beloved, for Heaven !
Ah ! pray with me ! Be this our latest token—
This memory of sweet moments—sweet, though sinless !
Ah ! pray with me ! that I may hve till death
The thought—“ we pray'd together for forgiveness ! ”

Louis. Oh ! wherefore never knew I till this hour
The treasure I shall lose ! I dare not call thee
Back from the Heaven where thou art half already !
Thy soul demands celestial destinies,
And stoops no more to earth. Be thine the peace,
And mine the penance ! Yet these awful walls,
The rigid laws of this severest order,
Yon spectral shapes, this human sepulchre,—
And thou, the soft, the delicate, the highborn,
The adored delight of Europe's mightiest king, —
Thou canst not bear it !

Duch. de la Vall. I have borne much worse—
Thy change and thy desertion !—Let it pass !
There is no terror in the things without ;
Our souls alone the palace or the prison ;
And the one thought that I have fled from sin
Will fill the cell with images more glorious,
And haunt its silence with a mightier music,
Than ever throng'd illumined halls, or broke
From harps by mortal strung !

Louis.

I will not hear thee !

I cannot brave these thoughts. Thy angel voice
 But tells me what a sun of heavenly beauty
 Glides from the earth, and leaves my soul to darkness.
 This is *my* work !—'twas I for whom that soul
 Forsook its native element ; for me,
 Sorrow consumed thy youth, and conscience gnaw'd
 That patient, tender, unreproachful heart.
 And now this crowns the whole ! the priest—the altar—
 The sacrifice—the victim ! Touch me not !
 Speak not ! I am unmann'd enough already.
 I—I—I choke ! These tears—let them speak for me.
Now ! now thy hand—farewell ! farewell, for ever !

[*Exit* LOUIS.]

Duch. de la Vall. Be firm, my heart, be firm !

[*After a pause, turning to BRAGELONE, with a slight smile.*

'Tis past ! we've conquer'd !

[*The DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE re-ascends to the altar—the crowd close around.*

[*Music.*

CHORUS.

Hark ! to the nuptial train are open'd wide
 The Eternal Gates, Hosanna to the bride !

Gram. She has ta'en the veil—the last dread rite is
 done.

Abbess [from the altar]. Sister Louise ! before the eter-
 nal grate

Becomes thy barrier from the living world,
 It is allow'd thee once more to behold
 The face of men, and bid farewell to friendship.

Brage. [aside]. Why do I shudder? why shrinks back
my being
From our last gaze, like Nature from the Grave?
One moment, and one look, and o'er her image
Thick darkness falls, till Death, that morning star,
Heralds immortal day. I hear her steps
Treading the mournful silence; o'er my soul
Pauses the freezing time. O Lord, support me!
One effort more—one effort!—Wake, my soul!
'Tis thy last trial; wilt thou play the craven?

[The crowd give way, the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE in the habit of the Carmelite nuns, passes down the steps of the altar, led by the Abbess—As she pauses to address those whom she recognizes in the crowd, the chorus chaunts:—

Sister, look and speak thy last,
From the world thou'rt dying fast;
While farewell to life thou'rt giving,
Dead already to the living.

Duch. de la Vall. [coming to the front of the stage sees LAUZUN]. Lauzun! thou serv'st a king, whate'er
his faults,
Who merits all thy homage: honour—love him.
His glory needs no friendship; but in sickness
Or sorrow, *kings* need love. Be faithful, Lauzun!
And, far from thy loud world, one lowly voice
Shall not forget thee.

Brage. [aside]. All the strife is hush'd!
My heart's wild sea lies mute!

Duch. de la Vall. [approaching BRAGELONE, and kneeling to him]. Now! friend and father,
Bless the poor Nun!

Brage. As Duchess of La Vallière
Thou wert not happy ; as the Carmelite Sister,
Say—*art* thou happy ?

Duch. de la Vall. Yes !

Brage. [*Saying his hand on her head*]. O Father, bless
her !

CHORUS.

Hark ! in heaven is mirth !

Jubilate !

Grief leaves guilt on earth !

Jubilate !

Joy for sin forgiven !

Jubilate !

Come, O Bride of Heaven !

Jubilate !

[*Curtain falls slowly.*]

THE LADY OF LYONS;

OR,

LOVE AND PRIDE.

PREFACE.

AN indistinct recollection of the very pretty little tale, called "The Bellows-Mender," suggested the plot of this Drama. The incidents are, however, greatly altered from those in the tale, and the characters entirely re-cast.

Having long had a wish to illustrate certain periods of the French history, so, in the selection of the date in which the scenes of this play are laid, I saw that the era of the Republic was that in which the incidents were rendered most probable, in which the probationary career of the hero could well be made sufficiently rapid for dramatic effect, and in which the character of the time itself was depicted by the agencies necessary to the conduct of the narrative. For during the early years of the first and most brilliant successes of the French Republic, in the general ferment of society, and the brief equalization of ranks, Claude's high-placed love, his ardent feelings, his unsettled principles (the struggle between which makes the passion of this drama), his ambition, and his career, were phenomena that characterized the age, and in which the spirit of the nation went along with the extravagance of the individual.

The play itself was composed with a twofold object. In the first place, sympathizing with the enterprise of Mr. Macready, as Manager of Covent Garden, and believing that many of the higher interests of the Drama were involved in the success or failure of an enterprise equally hazardous and disinterested, I felt, if I may so presume to express myself, something of the Brotherhood of Art; and it was only for Mr. Macready to think it possible that I might serve him in order to induce me to make the attempt.

Secondly, in that attempt I was mainly anxious to see whether or not, after the comparative failure on the stage of "The Duchess de la Vallière," certain critics had truly declared that it was not in my power to attain the art of dramatic construction and theatrical effect. I felt, indeed, that it was in this that a writer, accustomed to the narrative class of composition, would have the most both to learn and *unlearn*. Accordingly, it was to the development of the plot and the arrangement of the incidents that I directed my chief attention ;—and I sought to throw whatever belongs to poetry less into the diction and the "felicity of words" than into the construction of the story, the creation of the characters, and the spirit of the pervading sentiment.

The authorship of the play was neither avowed nor suspected until the play had established itself in public favour. The announcement of my name was the signal for attacks, chiefly political, to which it is now needless to refer. When a work has outlived for some time the earlier hostilities of criticism, there comes a new race of critics to which a writer may, for the most part, calmly trust for a fair consideration, whether of the faults or the merits of his performance.

TO

THE AUTHOR OF "ION,"

WHOSE GENIUS AND EXAMPLE HAVE ALIKE CONTRIBUTED

TOWARDS THE REGENERATION OF

The National Drama,

THIS PLAY IS INSCRIBED.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BEAUSEANT, *a rich gentleman of Lyons, in love with, and refused by, Pauline Deschappelles.*

GLAVIS, *his friend, also a rejected suitor to Pauline.*

COLONEL (afterwards General) DAMAS, *cousin to Mme. Deschappelles, and an officer in the French army.*

MONSIEUR DESCHAPPELLES, *a Lyonnese merchant, father to Pauline.*

LANDLORD OF THE GOLDEN LION.

GASPAR.

CLAUDE MELNOTTE.

FIRST OFFICER, SECOND OFFICER, THIRD OFFICER.

Servants, Notary, &c.

MADAME DESCHAPPELLES.

PAULINE, *her daughter.*

THE WIDOW MELNOTTE, *mother to Claude.*

JANET, *the innkeeper's daughter.*

MARIAN, *maid to Pauline.*

Scene—Lyons and the neighbourhood.

Time—1795–1798.

THE LADY OF LYONS;

OR,

LOVE AND PRIDE.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

A room in the house of M. DESCHAPPELLES, at Lyons. PAULINE reclining on a sofa; MARIAN, her maid fanning her—Flowers and notes on a table beside the sofa—MADAME DESCHAPPELLES seated—The gardens are seen from the open window.

Mme. Deschap. Marian, put that rose a little more to the left.—[*MARIAN alters the position of a rose in PAULINE'S hair.*—Ah, so!—that improves the hair,—the *tournure*, the *je ne sais quoi*!—You are certainly very handsome, child!—quite my style;—I don't wonder that you make such a sensation!—Old, young, rich, and poor, do homage to the Beauty of Lyons!—Ah, we live again in our children,—especially when they have our eyes and complexion!

Pauline [languidly]. Dear mother, you spoil your Pauline!—[*Aside.*] I wish I knew who sent me these flowers!

Mme. Deschap. No, child!—If I praise you, it is only to inspire you with a proper ambition.—You are born to

make a great marriage.—Beauty is valuable or worthless according as you invest the property to the best advantage.—Marian, go and order the carriage !

[*Exit* MARIAN.]

Pauline. Who can it be that sends me, every day, these beautiful flowers ?—how sweet they are !

Enter Servant.

Servant. Monsieur Beauseant, madam.

Mme. Deschap. Let him enter. Pauline, this is another offer !—I know it is !—Your father should engage an additional clerk to keep the account-book of your conquests.

Enter BEAUSEANT.

Beau. Ah, ladies, how fortunate I am to find you at home !—[*Aside.*] How lovely she looks !—It is a great sacrifice I make in marrying into a family in trade !—they will be eternally grateful !—[*Aloud.*] Madam, you will permit me a word with your charming daughter.—[*Approaches* PAULINE, *who rises disdainfully.*]—Madoiselle, I have ventured to wait upon you, in a hope that you must long since have divined. Last night, when you outshone all the beauty of Lyons, you completed your conquest over me ! You know that my fortune is not exceeded by any estate in the province,—you know that, but for the Revolution, which has defrauded me of my titles, I should be noble. May I, then, trust that you will not reject my alliance ? I offer you my hand and heart.

Pauline [*aside*]. He has the air of a man who confers a favour !—[*Aloud.*] Sir, you are very condescending—I thank you humbly ; but, being duly sensible of my own

demerits, you must allow me to decline the honour you propose.

[*Curtseys, and turns away.*]

Beau. Decline ! impossible !—you are not serious !—Madam, suffer me to appeal to *you*. I am a suitor for your daughter's hand—the settlements shall be worthy her beauty and my station. May I wait on M. Deschappelles ?

Mme. Deschap. M. Deschappelles never interferes in the domestic arrangements,—you are very obliging. If you were still a marquis, or if my daughter were intended to marry a commoner,—why, perhaps, we might give you the preference.

Beau. A commoner !—we are all commoners in France now.

Mme. Deschap. In France, yes ; but there is a nobility still left in the other countries in Europe. We are quite aware of your good qualities, and don't doubt that you will find some lady more suitable to your pretensions. We shall be always happy to see you as an acquaintance, M. Beauseant !—My dear child, the carriage will be here presently.

Beau. Say no more, madam !—say no more !—[*Aside.*] Refused ! and by a merchant's daughter !—refused ! It will be all over Lyons before sunset !—I will go and bury myself in my chateau, study philosophy, and turn woman-hater. Refused ! they ought to be sent to a madhouse !—Ladies, I have the honour to wish you a very good morning. [Exit.

Mme. Deschap. How forward these men are !—I think, child, we kept up our dignity. Any girl, however inexperienced, knows how to accept an offer, but it requires a

vast deal of address to refuse one with proper condescension and disdain. I used to practise it at school with the dancing-master.

Enter DAMAS.

Damas. Good morning, cousin Deschappelles.—Well, Pauline, are you recovered from last night's ball?—So many triumphs must be very fatiguing. Even M. Glavis sighed most piteously when you departed ; but that might be the effect of the supper.

Pauline. M. Glavis, indeed !

Mme. Deschap. M. Glavis?—as if my daughter would think of M. Glavis !

Damas. Hey-day !—why not ?—His father left him a very pretty fortune, and his birth is higher than yours, cousin Deschappelles. But perhaps you are looking to M. Beauseant,—his father was a marquis before the Revolution.

Pauline. M. Beauseant !—Cousin, you delight in tormenting me !

Mme. Deschap. Don't mind him, Pauline !—Cousin Damas, you have no susceptibility of feeling,—there is a certain indelicacy in all your ideas.—M. Beauseant knows already that he is no match for my daughter !

Damas. Pooh ! pooh ! one would think you intended your daughter to marry a prince !

Mme. Deschap. Well, and if I did ?—what then ?—Many a foreign prince—

Damas [*interrupting her*]. Foreign prince !—foreign fiddlestick !—you ought to be ashamed of such nonsense at your time of life.

Mme. Deschap. My time of life !—That is an expression never applied to any lady till she is sixty-nine and three-

quarters ;—and only then by the clergyman of the parish.

Enter Servant.

Servant. Madame, the carriage is at the door. [*Exit.*

Mme. Deschap. Come, child, put on your bonnet—you really have a very thorough-bred air—not at all like your poor father.—[*Fondly.*] Ah, you little coquette ! when a young lady is always making mischief, it is a sure sign that she takes after her mother !

Pauline. Good day, cousin Damas—and a better humour to you.—[*Going back to the table and taking the flowers.*] Who could have sent me these flowers ?

[*Exeunt* PAULINE and MADAME DESCHAPPELLES.

Damas. That would be an excellent girl if her head had not been turned. I fear she is now become incorrigible ! Zounds, what a lucky fellow I am to be still a bachelor ! They may talk of the devotion of the sex—but the most faithful attachment in life is that of a woman in love—with herself. [*Exit.*



SCENE II.

The exterior of a small Village Inn—sign, the Golden Lion—a few leagues from Lyons, which is seen at a distance.

Beau. [*behind the scenes*]. Yes, you may bait the horses ; we shall rest here an hour.

Enter BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Gla. Really, my dear Beauseant, consider that I have promised to spend a day or two with you at your château,

—that I am quite at your mercy for my entertainment,—and yet you are as silent and as gloomy as a mute at a funeral, or an Englishman at a party of pleasure.

Beau. Bear with me !—the fact is that I am miserable.

Gla. You—the richest and gayest bachelor in Lyons ?

Beau. It is because I am a bachelor that I am miserable.—Thou knowest Pauline—the only daughter of the rich merchant, Mons. Deschappelles ?

Gla. Know her ?—who does not ?—as pretty as Venus, and as proud as Juno.

Beau. Her taste is worse than her pride.—[*Drawing himself up.*] Know, Glavis, she has actually refused *me* !

Gla. [*aside*]. So she has me !—very consoling ! In all cases of heart-ache, the application of another man's disappointment draws out the pain and allays the irritation.—[*Aloud.*] Refused you ! and wherefore ?

Beau. I know not, unless it be because the Revolution swept away my father's title of Marquis,—and she will not marry a commoner. Now, as we have no noblemen left in France,—as we are all citizens and equals, she can only hope that, in spite of the war, some English Milord or German Count will risk his life, by coming to Lyons, that this *fille du Roturier* may condescend to accept him. Refused me, and with scorn !—By Heaven, I'll not submit to it tamely :—I'm in a perfect fever of mortification and rage.—Refuse *me*, indeed !

Gla. Be comforted, my dear fellow,—I will tell you a secret. For the same reason she refused *ME* !

Beau. You !—that's a very different matter ! But give me your hand, Glavis,—we'll think of some plan to humble her. *Mille diables* ! I should like to see her married to a strolling player !

Enter Landlord and his Daughter from the Inn.

Land. Your servant, citizen Beauseant,—servant, sir. Perhaps you will take dinner before you proceed to your château ; our larder is most plentifully supplied.

Beau. I have no appetite.

Gla. Nor I. Still it is bad travelling on an empty stomach. What have you got ? [*Takes and looks over the bill of fare.*]

[*Shout without.*] “Long live the Prince !—Long live the Prince !”

Beau. The Prince !—what Prince is that ? I thought we had no princes left in France.

Land. Ha, ha ! the lads always call him Prince. He has just won the prize in the shooting-match, and they are taking him home in triumph.

Beau. Him ! and who’s Mr. Him ?

Land. Who should he be but the pride of the village, Claude Melnotte ?—Of course you have heard of Claude Melnotte ?

Gla. [*giving back the bill of fare*]. Never had that honour. Soup—ragout of hare—roast chicken, and, in short, all you have !

Beau. The son of old Melnotte, the gardener ?

Land. Exactly so—a wonderful young man.

Beau. How, wonderful ?—Are his cabbages better than other people’s ?

Land. Nay, he don’t garden any more ; his father left left him well off. He’s only a genus.

Gla. A what ?

Land. A genus !—a man who can do everything in life except anything that’s useful ;—that’s a genus.

Beau. You raise my curiosity ;—proceed.

Land. Well, then, about four years ago, old Melnotte died, and left his son well to do in the world. We then all observed that a great change came over young Claude: he took to reading and Latin, and hired a professor from Lyons, who had so much in his head that he was forced to wear a great full-bottom wig to cover it. Then he took a fencing-master, and a dancing-master, and a music-master ; and then he learned to paint ; and at last it was said that young Claude was to go to Paris, and set up for a painter. The lads laughed at him at first ; but he is a stout fellow, is Claude, and as brave as a lion, and soon taught them to laugh the wrong side of their mouths ; and now all the boys swear by him, and all the girls pray for him.

Beau. A promising youth, certainly ! And why do they call him Prince ?

Land. Partly because he is at the head of them all, and partly because he has such a proud way with him, and wears such fine clothes—and, in short, looks like a prince.

Beau. And what could have turned the foolish fellow's brain ? The Revolution, I suppose ?

Land. Yes—the revolution that turns us all topsyturvy—the revolution of Love.

Beau. Romantic young Corydon ! And with whom is he in love ?

Land. Why—but it is a secret, gentlemen.

Beau. Oh ! certainly.

Land. Why, then, I hear from his mother, good soul ! that it is no less a person than the Beauty of Lyons, Pauline Deschappelles.

Beau. and Glavis. Ha, ha !—Capital !

Land. You may laugh, but it is as true as I stand here.

Beau. And what does the Beauty of Lyons say to his suit?

Land. Lord, sir, she never even condescended to look at him, though when he was a boy he worked in her father's garden.

Beau. Are you sure of that?

Land. His mother says that Mademoiselle does not know him by sight.

Beau. [*taking GLAVIS aside*]. I have hit it,—I have it ;—here is our revenge ! Here is a prince for our haughty damsel. Do you take me ?

Gla. Deuce take me if I do !

Beau. Blockhead !—it's as clear as a map. What if we could make this elegant clown pass himself off as a foreign prince ?—lend him money, clothes, equipage for the purpose ?—make him propose to Pauline ?—marry Pauline ? Would it not be delicious ?

Gla. Ha, ha !—Excellent ! But how shall we support the necessary expenses of his highness ?

Beau. Pshaw ! Revenge is worth a much larger sacrifice than a few hundred louis ;—as for details, my vale is the trustiest fellow in the world, and shall have the appointment of his highness's establishment. Let's go to him at once, and see if he be really this Admirable Crichton.

Gla. With all my heart ;—but the dinner ?

Beau. Always thinking of dinner ! Hark ye, landlord ; how far is it to young Melnotte's cottage ? I should like to see such a prodigy.

Land. Turn down the lane,—then strike across the common,—and you will see his mother's cottage.

Beau. True, he lives with his mother.—[*Aside.*] We

will not trust to an old woman's discretion ; better send for him hither. I'll just step in and write him a note. Come, Glavis.

Gla. Yes,—Beauseant, Glavis, and Co., manufacturers of princes, wholesale and retail,—an uncommonly genteel line of business. But why so grave ?

Beau. You think only of the sport,—I of the revenge.

[*Exeunt within the Inn.*]

SCENE III.

The interior of MELNOTTE'S cottage ; flowers placed here and there ; a guitar on an oaken table, with a portfolio, &c. ; a picture on an easel, covered by a curtain ; fencing-foils crossed over the mantelpiece ; an attempt at refinement in spite of the homeliness of the furniture, &c. ; a staircase to the right conducts to the upper story.

[*Shout without.*] “Long live Claude Melnotte !” “Long live the Prince !”

The Widow Mel. Hark !—there's my dear son ;—carried off the prize, I'm sure ; and now he'll want to treat them all.

Claude Mel. [*opening the door*]. What ! you will not come in, my friends ! Well, well,—there's a trifle to make merry elsewhere. Good day to you all,—good day !

[*Shout.*] “Hurrah ! Long live Prince Claude !”

Enter CLAUDE MELNOTTE, with a rifle in his hand.

Mel. Give me joy, dear mother !—I've won the prize !—never missed one shot ! Is it not handsome, this gun ?

Widow. Humph !—Well, what is it worth, Claude ?

Mel. Worth! What is a riband worth to a soldier? Worth! everything! Glory is priceless!

Widow. Leave glory to great folks. Ah! Claude, Claude, castles in the air cost a vast deal to keep up! How is all this to end? What good does it do thee to learn Latin, and sing songs, and play on the guitar, and fence, and dance, and paint pictures? All very fine; but what does it bring in?

Mel. Wealth! wealth, my mother! Wealth to the mind—wealth to the heart—high thoughts—bright dreams—the hope of fame—the ambition to be worthier to love Pauline.

Widow. My poor son!—The young lady will never think of thee.

Mel. Do the stars think of us? Yet if the prisoner see them shine into his dungeon, wouldst thou bid him turn away from *their* lustre? Even so from this low cell, poverty, I lift my eyes to Pauline and forget my chains.—[*Goes to the picture and draws aside the curtain.*] See, this is her image—painted from memory. Oh, how the canvas wrongs her!—[*Takes up the brush and throws it aside.*] I shall never be a painter! I can paint no likeness but one, and that is above all art. I would turn soldier—France needs soldiers! But to leave the air that Pauline breathes! What is the hour?—so late? I will tell thee a secret, mother. Thou knowest that for the last six weeks I have sent every day the rarest flowers to Pauline?—she wears them. I have seen them on her breast. Ah, and then the whole universe seemed filled with odours! I have now grown more bold—I have poured my worship into poetry—I have sent the verses to Pauline—I have signed them with my own name. My

messenger ought to be back by this time. I bade him wait for the answer.

Widow. And what answer do you expect, Claude ?

Mel. That which the Queen of Navarre sent to the poor troubadour :—" Let me see the Oracle that can tell nations I am beautiful ! " She will admit me. I shall hear her speak—I shall meet her eyes—I shall read upon her cheek the sweet thoughts that translate themselves into blushes. Then—then, oh, then—she may forget that I am the peasant's son !

Widow. Nay, if she will but hear thee talk, Claude ?

Mel. I foresee it all. She will tell me that desert is the true rank. She will give me a badge—a flower—a glove ! Oh rapture ! I shall join the armies of the republic—I shall rise—I shall win a name that beauty will not blush to hear. I shall return with the right to say to her—" See, how love does not level the proud, but raise the humble ! " Oh, how my heart swells within me !—Oh, what glorious prophets of the future are youth and hope !

[*Knock at the door.*]

Widow. Come in.

Enter GASPAR.

Mel. Welcome, Gaspar, welcome. Where is the letter ? Why do you turn away, man ? where is the letter ? [GASPAR gives him one.] This ! This is mine, the one I intrusted to thee. Didst thou not leave it ?

Gaspar. Yes, I left it.

Mel. My own verses returned to me. Nothing else !

Gaspar. Thou wilt be proud to hear how thy messenger was honoured. For thy sake, Melnotte, I have borne that which no Frenchman can bear without disgrace.

Mel. Disgrace, Gaspar ! Disgrace ?

Gaspar. I gave thy letter to the porter, who passed it from lackey to lackey till it reached the lady it was meant for.

Mel. It reached her, then ;—you are sure of that ! It reached her,—well, well !

Gaspar. It reached her, and was returned to me with blows. Dost hear, Melnotte ? with blows ! Death ! are we slaves still, that we are to be thus dealt with, we peasants ?

Mel. With blows ? No, Gaspar, no ; not blows !

Gaspar. I could show thee the marks if it were not so deep a shame to bear them. The lackey who tossed thy letter into the mire swore that his lady and her mother never were so insulted. What could thy letter contain, Claude ?

Mel. [*looking over the letter*]. Not a line that a serf might not have written to an empress. No, not one.

Gaspar. They promise thee the same greeting they gave me, if thou wilt pass that way. Shall we endure this, Claude ?

Mel. [*wringing GASPAR'S hand*]. Forgive me, the fault was mine, I have brought this on thee ; I will not forget it ; thou shalt be avenged ! The heartless insolence !

Gaspar. Thou art moved, Melnotte ; think not of me ; I would go through fire and water to serve thee ; but,—a blow ! It is not the *bruise* that galls,—it is the *blush*, Melnotte.

Mel. Say, what message ?—How insulted !—Wherefore ?—What the offence ?

Gaspar. Did you not write to Pauline Deschappelles, the daughter of the rich merchant ?

Mel. Well?—

Gaspar. And are you not a peasant—a gardener's son?—that was the offence. Sleep on it, Melnotte. Blows to a French citizen, blows !

[*Exit.*

Widow. Now you are cured, Claude !

Mel. [*tearing the letter*]. So do I scatter her image to the winds—I will stop her in the open streets—I will insult her—I will beat her menial ruffians—I will——
[*Turns suddenly to Widow.*] Mother, am I humpbacked—deformed—hideous ?

Widow. You !

Mel. A coward—a thief—a liar ?

Widow. You !

Mel. Or a dull fool—a vain, drivelling, brainless idiot ?

Widow. No, no.

Mel. What am I then—worse than all these ? Why, I am a peasant ! What has a peasant to do with love ? Vain revolutions, why lavish your cruelty on the great ? Oh that we—we, the hewers of wood and drawers of water—had been swept away, so that the proud might learn what the world would be without us !—

[*Knock at the door.*

Enter Servant from the Inn.

Servant. A letter for Citizen Melnotte.

Mel. A letter ! from her perhaps—who sent thee ?

Servant. Why, Monsieur—I mean Citizen—Beauseant, who stops to dine at the Golden Lion, on his way to his château.

Mel. Beauseant !—[*Reads.*]

“ Young man, I know thy secret—thou lovest above thy station : if thou hast wit, courage, and discretion, I

can secure to thee the realization of thy most sanguine hopes ; and the sole condition I ask in return is, that thou shalt be steadfast to thine own ends. I shall demand from thee a solemn oath to marry her whom thou lovest ; to bear her to thine home on thy wedding night. I am serious—if thou wouldst learn more, lose not a moment, but follow the bearer of this letter to thy friend and patron,—CHARLES BEAUSEANT.”

Mel. Can I believe my eyes ? Are our own passions the sorcerers that raise up for us spirits of good or evil ? I will go instantly.

Widow. What is this, Claude ?

Mel. “Marry her whom thou lovest”—“bear her to thine own home.”—Oh, revenge and love ; which of you is the stronger ?—[*Gazing on the picture.*] Sweet face, thou smilest on me from the canvas : weak fool that I am, do I then love her still ? No, it is the vision of my own romance that I have worshipped : it is the reality to which I bring scorn for scorn. Adieu, mother : I will return anon. My brain reels—the earth swims before me.—[*Looks again at the letter.*] No, it is *not* a mockery ; I do *not* dream !

[*Exit.*

ACT II.—SCENE I.

The gardens of M. DESCHAPPELLES' house at Lyons—the house seen at the back of the stage.

Enter BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Beau. Well, what think you of my plot ? Has it not succeeded to a miracle ? The instant that I introduced his Highness the Prince of Como to the pompous mother and the scornful daughter, it was all over with them : he came—he saw—he conquered : and, though it is not many days since he arrived, they have already promised him the hand of Pauline.

Gla. It is lucky, though, that you told them his highness travelled incognito, for fear the Directory (who are not very fond of princes) should lay him by the heels ; for he has a wonderful wish to keep up his rank, and scatters our gold about with as much coolness as if he were watering his own flower-pots.

Beau. True, he is damnably extravagant ; I think the sly dog does it out of malice. However, it must be owned that he reflects credit on his loyal subjects, and makes a very pretty figure in his fine clothes, with my diamond snuff-box.

Gla. And my diamond ring ! But do you think he will be firm to the last ? I fancy I see symptoms of relenting : he will never keep up his rank, if he once let out his conscience.

Beau. His oath binds him ! he cannot retract without being forsworn, and those low fellows are always superstitious ! But, as it is, I tremble lest he be discovered : that bluff Colonel Damas (Madame Deschappelles' cousin) evidently suspects him : we must make haste and conclude the farce : I have thought of a plan to end it this very day.

Gla. This very day ! Poor Pauline : her dream will be soon over.

Beau. Yes, this day they shall be married ; this evening, according to his oath, he shall carry his bride to the Golden Lion, and then pomp, equipage, retinue, and title, all shall vanish at once ; and her Highness the Princess shall find that she has refused the son of a Marquis, to marry the son of a gardener.—Oh, Pauline ! once loved, now hated, yet still not relinquished, thou shalt drain the cup to the dregs,—thou shalt know what it is to be humbled !

Enter from the house, MELNOTTE, as the Prince of Como, leading in PAULINE ; MADAME DESCHAPPELLES, fanning herself ; and COLONEL DAMAS.

[*BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS bow respectfully. PAULINE and MELNOTTE walk apart.*]

Mme. Deschap. Good morning, gentlemen ; really I am so fatigued with laughter ; the dear Prince is so entertaining. What wit he has ! Any one may see that he has spent his whole life in courts.

Damas. And what the deuce do you know about courts, cousin Deschappelles ? You women regard men just as you buy books—you never care about what is in them, but how they are bound and lettered. 'Sdeath, I don't

think you would even look at your Bible if it had not a title to it.

Mme. Deschap. How coarse you are, cousin Damas !—quite the manners of a barrack—you don't deserve to be one of our family ; really we must drop your acquaintance when Pauline marries. I cannot patronize any relations that would discredit my future son-in-law, the Prince of Como.

Mel. [*advancing*]. These are beautiful gardens, madame, (BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS retire)—who planned them ?

Mme. Deschap. A gardener named Melnotte, your highness—an honest man who knew his station. I can't say as much for his son—a presuming fellow, who,—ha ! ha ! actually wrote verses—such doggerel !—to my daughter.

Pauline. Yes, how you would have laughed at them, Prince !—you, who write such beautiful verses !

Mel. This Melnotte must be a monstrous impudent person !

Damas. Is he good-looking ?

Mme. Deschap. I never notice such *canaille*—an ugly, mean-looking clown, if I remember right.

Damas. Yet I heard your porter say he was wonderfully like his highness.

Mel. [*taking snuff*]. You are complimentary.

Mme. Deschap. For shame, cousin Damas !—like the Prince, indeed !

Pauline. Like you ! Ah, mother, like our beautiful prince ! I'll never speak to you again, cousin Damas.

Mel. [*aside*]. Humph !—rank is a great beautifier ! I never passed for an Apollo while I was a peasant ; if I am so handsome as a prince, what should I be as an

emperor! [*Aloud.*] Monsieur Beauseant, will you honour me? [*Offers snuff.*]

Beau. No, your highness; I have no small vices.

Mel. Nay, if it were a vice, you'd be sure to have it, Monsieur Beauseant.

Mme. Deschap. Ha! ha!—how very severe!—what wit!

Beau. [*in a rage and aside*]. Curse his impertinence!

Mme. Deschap. What a superb snuff-box!

Pauline. And what a beautiful ring!

Mel. You like the box—a trifle—interesting perhaps from associations—a present from Louis XIV. to my great-great-grandmother. Honour me by accepting it.

Beau. [*plucking him by the sleeve*]. How!—what the devil! My box—are you mad? It is worth five hundred louis.

Mel. [*unheeding him, and turning to PAULINE*]. And you like this ring? Ah, it has, indeed, a lustre since your eyes have shone on it [*placing it on her finger*]. Henceforth hold me, sweet enchantress, the Slave of the Ring.

Gla. [*pulling him*]. Stay, stay—what are you about? My maiden aunt's legacy—a diamond of the first water. You shall be hanged for swindling, sir.

Mel. [*pretending not to hear*]. It is curious, this ring; it is the one with which my grandfather, the Doge of Venice, married the Adriatic!

[*MADAME and PAULINE examine the ring.*]

Mel. [*to BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS*]. Fie, gentlemen! princes must be generous!—[*Turns to DAMAS, who watches them closely.*] These kind friends have my interest so much at heart, that they are as careful of my property as if it were their own!

Beau. and Gla. [confusedly]. Ha ! ha !—very good joke that !

[Appear to remonstrate with MELNOTTE in dumb show.]

Damas. What's all that whispering ? I am sure there is some juggle here : hang me, if I think he is an Italian after all. Gad, I'll try him. *Servitore umillissimo, Eccellenza.**

Mel. Hum—what does he mean, I wonder ?

Damas. Godo di vedervi in buona salute.†

Mel. Hem—hem !

Damas. Fa bel tempo—che si dice di nuovo ? ‡

Mel. Well, sir, what's all that gibberish ?

Damas. Oh, oh !—only Italian, your highness !—The Prince of Como does not understand his own language !

Mel. Not as you pronounce it ; who the deuce could ?

Mme. Deschap. Ha ! ha ! cousin Damas, never pretend to what you don't know.

Pauline. Ha ! ha ! cousin Damas ; you speak Italian, indeed ! *[Makes a mocking gesture at him.]*

Beau. [to GLAVIS]. Clever dog !—how ready !

Gla. Ready, yes ; with my diamond ring !—Damn his readiness !

Damas. Laugh at me !—laugh at a colonel in the French army !—the fellow's an impostor ; I know he is. I'll see if he understands fighting as well as he does Italian.—*[Goes up to him, and aside.]* Sir, you are a jackanapes !—Can you construe that ?

Mel. No, sir ; I never construe affronts in the presence

* Your Excellency's most humble servant.

† I am glad to see you in good health.

‡ Fine weather. What news is there ?

of ladies ; by-and-by I shall be happy to take a lesson—
or give one.

Damas. I'll find the occasion, never fear !

Mme. Deschap. Where are you going, cousin ?

Damas. To correct my Italian. [Exit.

Beau. [to GLAVIS]. Let us after, and pacify him ; he
evidently suspects something.

Gla. Yes !—but my diamond ring !

Beau. And my box !—We are over-taxed, fellow-sub-
jects !—we must stop the supplies, and dethrone the
prince.

Gla. Prince !—he ought to be heir-apparent to King
Stork. [Exeunt BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Mme. Deschap. Dare I ask your highness to forgive
my cousin's insufferable vulgarity ?

Pauline. Oh yes !—you will forgive his manner for the
sake of his heart.

Mel. And the sake of his cousin.—Ah, madam, there
is one comfort in rank,—we are so sure of our position
that we are not easily affronted. Besides, M. Damas has
bought the right of indulgence from his friends, by never
showing it to his enemies.

Pauline. Ah ! he is, indeed, as brave in action as he is
rude in speech. He rose from the ranks to his present
grade, and in two years !

Mel. In two years !—two years, did you say ?

Mme. Deschap. [aside]. I don't like leaving girls alone
with their lovers ; but, with a prince, it would be so ill-
bred to be prudish. [Exit.

Mel. You can be proud of your connection with one
who owes his position to merit,—not birth.

Pauline. Why, yes ; but still—

Mel. Still what, Pauline !

Pauline. There is something glorious in the heritage of command. A man who has ancestors is like a representative of the past.

Mel. True ; but, like other representatives, nine times out of ten he is a silent member. Ah, Pauline ! not to the past, but to the future, looks true nobility, and finds its blazon in posterity.

Pauline. You say this to please me, who have no ancestors ; but you, prince, must be proud of so illustrious a race !

Mel. No, no ! I would not, were I fifty times a prince, be a pensioner on the dead ! I honour birth and ancestry when they are regarded as the incentives to exertion, not the title-deeds to sloth ! I honour the laurels that overshadow the graves of our fathers ;—it is our fathers I emulate, when I desire that beneath the evergreen I myself have planted my own ashes may repose ! Dearest ! couldst thou but see with my eyes !

Pauline. I cannot forego pride when I look on thee, and think that thou lovest me. Sweet Prince, tell me again of thy palace by the Lake of Como ; it is so pleasant to hear of thy splendours since thou didst swear to me that they would be desolate without Pauline ; and when thou describest them, it is with a mocking lip and a noble scorn, as if custom had made thee disdain greatness.

Mel. Nay, dearest, nay, if thou wouldst have me paint The home to which, could love fulfil its prayers,
This hand would lead thee, listen ! *—A deep vale

* The reader will observe that Melnotte evades the request of Pauline. He proceeds to describe a home, which he does not say

Shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world ;
Near a clear lake, margin'd by fruits of gold
And whispering myrtles ; glassing softest skies,
As cloudless, save with rare and roseate shadows,
As I would have thy fate !

Pauline.

My own dear love !

Mel. A palace lifting to eternal summer
Its marble walls, from out a glossy bower
Of coolest foliage musical with birds,
Whose songs should syllable thy name ! At noon
We'd sit beneath the arching vines, and wonder
Why Earth could be unhappy, while the Heavens
Still left us youth and love ! We'd have no friends
That were not lovers ; no ambition, save
To excel them all in love ; we'd read no books
That were not tales of love—that we might smile
To think how poorly eloquence of words
Translates the poetry of hearts like ours !
And when night came, amidst the breathless Heavens
We'd guess what star should be our home when love
Becomes immortal ; while the perfumed light
Stole through the mists of alabaster lamps,
And every air was heavy with the sighs
Of orange-groves and music from sweet lutes,

he possesses, but to which he would lead her, "*could Love fulfil its prayers.*" This caution is intended as a reply to a sagacious critic who censures the description, because it is not an exact and prosaic inventory of the characteristics of the Lake of Como !—When Melnotte, for instance, talks of birds "that syllable the name of Pauline" (by the way, a literal translation from an Italian poet), he is not thinking of ornithology, but probably of the Arabian Nights. He is venting the extravagant, but natural, enthusiasm of the poet and the lover.

And murmurs of low fountains that gush forth
I' the midst of roses !—Dost thou like the picture ?

Pauline. Oh, as the bee upon the flower, I hang
Upon the honey of thy eloquent tongue !
Am I not blest ? And if I love too wildly,
Who would not love thee like Pauline ?

Mel. [*bitterly*]. Oh, false one !
It is the *prince* thou lovest, not the *man* :
If in the stead of luxury, pomp, and power,
I had painted poverty, and toil, and care,
Thou hadst found no honey on my tongue ;—Pauline,
That is not love !

Pauline. Thou wrong'st me, cruel Prince !
At first, in truth, I might not have been won,
Save through the weakness of a flatter'd pride ;
But *now*,—oh ! trust me,—couldst thou fall from power
And sink——

Mel. As low as that poor gardener's son
Who dared to lift his eyes to thee ?—

Pauline. Even then,
Methinks thou wouldst be only made more dear
By the sweet thought that I could prove how deep
Is woman's love ! We are like the insects, caught
By the poor glittering of a garish flame ;
But, oh, the wings once scorch'd, the brightest star
Lures us no more ; and by the fatal light
We cling till death !

Mel. Angel !

[*Aside.*] O conscience ! conscience !
It must not be ;—her love hath grown a torture
Worse than her hate. I will at once to Beauseant,
And—ha ! he comes. Sweet love, one moment leave me.

I have business with these gentlemen—I—I
Will forthwith join you.

Pauline.

Do not tarry long !

[*Exit.*

Enter BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Mel. Release me from my oath,—I will not marry her !

Beau. Then thou art perjured.

Mel. No, I was not in my senses when I swore to thee to marry her ! I was blind to all but her scorn !—deaf to all but my passion and my rage ! Give me back my poverty and my honour !

Beau. It is too late,—you must marry her ! and this day. I have a story already coined, and sure to pass current. This Damas suspects thee,—he will set the police to work ;—thou wilt be detected—Pauline will despise and execrate thee. Thou will be sent to the common gaol as a swindler.

Mel. Fiend !

Beau. And in the heat of the girl's resentment (you know of what resentment is capable), and the parents' shame, she will be induced to marry the first that offers—even perhaps your humble servant.

Mel. You ! No ; that were worse—for thou hast no mercy ! I will marry her—I will keep my oath. Quick, then, with the damnable invention thou art hatching ;—quick, if thou wouldst not have me strangle thee or myself.

Gla. What a tiger ! Too fierce for a prince ;—he ought to have been the Grand Turk.

Beau. Enough—I will despatch ; be prepared.

[*Exeunt BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.*

Enter DAMAS with two swords.

Damas. Now, then, sir, the ladies are no longer your excuse. I have brought you a couple of dictionaries ; let us see if your Highness can find out the Latin for *bilbo*.

Mel. Away, sir ! I am in no humour for jesting.

Damas. I see you understand something of the grammar ; you decline the noun-substantive "small-sword" with great ease ; but that won't do—you must take a lesson in *parsing*.

Mel. Fool !

Damas. Sir, as sons take after their mother, so the man who calls me a fool insults the lady who bore me ; there's no escape for you—fight you shall, or——

Mel. Oh, enough ! enough !—take your ground.

[*They fight ; DAMAS is disarmed. MELNOTTE takes up the sword and returns it to DAMAS respectfully.*]

A just punishment to the brave soldier who robs the State of its best property—the sole right to his valour and his life.

Damas. Sir, you fence exceedingly well ; you must be a man of honour—I don't care a jot whether you are a prince ; but a man who has carte and tierce at his fingers' ends must be a gentleman.

Mel. [*aside*]. Gentleman ! Ay, I was a gentleman before I turned conspirator ; for honest men are the gentlemen of Nature ! Colonel, they tell me you rose from the ranks.

Damas. I did.

Mel. And in two years !

Damas. It is true ; that's no wonder in our army at

present. Why the oldest general in the service is scarcely thirty, and we have some of two-and-twenty.

Mel. Two-and-twenty !

Damas. Yes ; in the French army, now a days, promotion is not a matter of purchase. We are all heroes, because we may be all generals. We have no fear of the cypress, because we may all hope for the laurel.

Mel. A general at two-and-twenty ! [*turning away*]—Sir, I may ask you a favour one of these days.

Damas. Sir, I shall be proud to grant it. It is astonishing how much I like a man after I've fought with him. [*Hides the swords.*]

Enter MADAME DESCHAPPELLES and BEAUSEANT.

Mme. Deschap. Oh, prince, — prince ! — What do I hear ? You must fly—you must quit us !

Mel. I !—

Beau. Yes, prince : read this letter, just received from my friend at Paris, one of the Directory ; they suspect you of designs against the Republic : they are very suspicious of princes, and your family take part with the Austrians. Knowing that I introduced your highness at Lyons, my friend writes to me to say that you must quit the town immediately, or you will be arrested,—thrown into prison, perhaps guillotined ! Fly !—I will order horses to your carriage instantly. Fly to Marseilles ; there you can take ship to Leghorn.

Mme. Deschap. And what's to become of Pauline ? Am I not to be mother to a princess, after all ?

Enter PAULINE and MONSIEUR DESCHAPPELES.

Pauline [*throwing herself into MELNOTTE's arms*]. You must leave us !—Leave Pauline !

Beau. Not a moment is to be wasted.

M. Deschap. I will go to the magistrates and inquire—

Beau. Then he is lost ; the magistrates, hearing he is suspected, will order his arrest.

Mme. Deschap. And I shall not be a princess-dowager !

Beau. Why not ? There is only one thing to be done :—send for the priest—let the marriage take place at once, and the prince carry home a bride ?

Mel. Impossible !—[*Aside*]. Villain.

Mme. Deschap. What, lose my child ?

Beau. And gain a princess !

Mme. Deschap. Oh, Monsieur Beauseant, you are so very kind, it must be so,—we ought not to be selfish, my daughter's happiness at stake. She will go away, too, in a carriage and six !

Pauline. Thou art here still,—I cannot part from thee,—my heart will break.

Mel. But thou wilt not consent to this hasty union ?—thou wilt not wed an outcast—a fugitive ?

Pauline. Ah ! if thou art in danger, who should share it but Pauline ?

Mel. [*aside*]. Distraction !—If the earth could swallow me !

M. Deschap. Gently ! gently ! The settlements—the contracts—my daughter's dowry !

Mel. The dowry !—I am not base enough for that ; no, not one farthing !

Beau. [*to MADAM*]. Noble fellow !—Really your good husband is too mercantile in these matters. Monsieur Deschappelles, you hear his highness : we can arrange

the settlements by proxy ; 'tis the way with people of quality.

M. Deschap. But——

Mme. Deschap. Hold your tongue !—Don't expose yourself !

Beau. I will bring the priest in a trice. Go in all of you and prepare ; the carriage shall be at the door before the ceremony is over.

Mme. Deschap. Be sure there are six horses, Beauseant ! You are very good to have forgiven us for refusing you ; but you see—a prince !

Beau. And such a prince ! Madame, I cannot blush at the success of so illustrious a rival.—[*Aside.*] Now will I follow them to the village, enjoy my triumph, and to-morrow, in the hour of thy shame and grief, I think, proud girl, thou wilt prefer even these arms to those of the gardener's son. [Exit.

Mme. Deschap. Come, Monsieur Deschappelles, give your arm to her highness that is to be.

M. Deschap. I don't like doing business in such a hurry ; 'tis not the way with the house of Deschappelles and Co.

Mme. Deschap. There, now, you fancy you are in the counting-house, don't you ? • [Pushes him to PAULINE.

Mel. Stay, stay, Pauline—one word. Have you no scruple, no fear ? Speak—it is not yet too late.

Pauline. When I loved thee, thy fate became mine. Triumph or danger—joy or sorrow—I am by thy side.

Damas. Well, well, prince, thou art a lucky man to be so loved. She is good little girl in spite of her foibles—make her as happy as if she were not to be a princess

[*slapping him on the shoulder*]. Come, sir, I wish you joy—young—tender—lovely ;—zounds, I envy you !

Mel. [*who has stood apart in gloomy abstraction*]. Do you ? *



ACT III.—SCENE I.

The exterior of the Golden Lion—time, twilight. The moon rises during the scene.

Enter Landlord and his Daughter from the Inn.

Land. Ha—ha—ha ! Well, I never shall get over it. Our Claude is a prince with a vengeance now. His carriage breaks down at my inn—ha—ha !

Janet. And what airs the young lady gives herself ! “Is this the best room you have, young woman ?” with such a toss of the head.

Land. Well, get in Janet : get in and see to the supper : the servants must sup before they go back.

[*Exeunt.*

* On the stage the following lines are added :—

“Do you ? Wise judges are we of each other.
‘Woo, wed, and bear her home !’ So runs the bond
To which I sold myself,—and then—what then ?
Away ?—I will not look beyond the hour.
Like children in the dark, I dare not face
The shades that gather round me in the distance.
You envy me—I thank you—you may read
My joy upon my brow—I thank you, sir !
If hearts had audible language, you would hear
What mine would answer when you talk of *envy* !”

Enter BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Beau. You see our princess is lodged at last—one stage more, and she'll be at her journey's end—the beautiful palace at the foot of the Alps!—ha—ha!

Gla. Faith, I pity the poor Pauline—especially if she's going to sup at the Golden Lion [*makes a wry face*]. I shall never forget that cursed ragout.

Enter MELNOTTE from the Inn.

Beau. Your servant, my prince; you reigned most worthily. I condole with you on your abdication. I am afraid that your highness's retinue are not very faithful servants. I think they will quit you in the moment of your fall—'tis the fate of greatness. But you are welcome to your fine clothes—also the diamond snuff-box, which Louis XIV. gave to your great-great-grandmother.

Gla. And the ring, with which your grandfather the Doge of Venice married the Adriatic.

Mel. I have kept my oath, gentlemen—say, have I kept my oath?

Beau. Most religiously.

Mel. Then you have done with me and mine—away with you!

Beau. How, knave?

Mel. Look you, our bond is over. Proud conquerors that we are, we have won the victory over a simple girl—compromised her honour—embittered her life—blasted, in their very blossoms, all the flowers of her youth. This is your triumph,—it is my shame! [*Turns to BEAUSEANT.*] Enjoy thy triumph, but not in my sight. I *was* her betrayer—I *am* her protector! Cross but her path—

one word of scorn, one look of insult—nay, but one quiver of that mocking lip, and I will teach thee that bitter word thou hast graven eternally in this heart—
Repentance !

Beau. His highness is most grandiloquent.

Mel. Highness me no more ! Beware ! Remorse has made me a new being. Away with you ! There is danger in me. Away !

Gla. [*aside*]. He's an awkward fellow to deal with : come away, Beauseant.

Beau. I know the respect due to rank. Adieu, my prince. Any commands at Lyons ? Yet hold—I promised you 200 louis on your wedding-day ; here they
ARE.

Mel. [*dashing the purse to the ground*]. I gave you revenge, I did not sell it. Take up your silver, Judas ; take it.—Ay, it is fit you should learn to stoop.

Beau. You will beg my pardon for this some day. [*Aside to GLAVIS.*] Come to my château—I shall return hither to-morrow, to learn how Pauline likes her new dignity.

Mel. Are you not gone yet ?

Beau. Your highness's most obedient, most faithful—

Gla. And most humble servants. Ha ! ha !

[*Exeunt BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.*]

Mel. Thank heaven I had no weapon, or I should have slain them. Wretch ! what can I say ? Where turn ? On all sides mockery—the very boors within—[*Laughter from the Inn*].—'Sdeath, if even in this short absence the exposure should have chanced. I will call her. We will go hence. I have already sent one I can trust to my mother's house. There, at least, none can insult her

agony—gloat upon her shame ! There alone must she learn what a villain she has sworn to love.

[*As he turns to the door enter PAULINE from the inn.*

Pauline. Ah ! my lord, what a place ! I never saw such rude people. They stare and wink so. I think the very sight of a prince, though he travels *incognito*, turns their honest heads. What a pity the carriage should break down in such a spot ! You are not well—the drops stand on your brow—your hand is feverish.

Mel. Nay, it is but a passing spasm ; the air——

Pauline. Is not the soft air of your native south—
How pale he is !—indeed thou art not well.
Where are our people ? I will call them.

Mel. Hold !

I—I am well.

Pauline. Thou art !—Ah ! now I know it.
Thou fanciest, my kind lord—I know thou dost—
Thou fanciest these rude walls, these rustic gossips,
Brick'd floors, sour wine, coarse viands, vex Pauline ;
And so they might, but thou art by my side,
And I forget all else.

Enter Landlord, the Servants peeping and laughing over his shoulder.

Land. My lord—your highness—
Will your most noble excellency choose—

Mel. Begone, sir ! [Exit Landlord laughing.

Pauline. How could they have learn'd thy rank ?
One's servants are so vain !—nay, let it not
Chafe thee, sweet prince !—a few short days and we
Shall see thy palace by its lake of silver,

And—nay, nay, spendthrift, is thy wealth of smiles
Already drain'd, or dost thou play the miser ?

Mel. Thine eyes would call up smiles in deserts, fair
one.

Let us escape these rustics : close at hand
There is a cot, where I have bid prepare
Our evening lodgment—a rude, homely roof,
But honest, where our welcome will not be
Made torture by the vulgar eyes and tongues
That are as death to Love ! A heavenly night !
The wooing air and the soft moon invite us.
Wilt walk ? I pray thee, now,—I know the path,
Ay, every inch of it !

Pauline. What, *thou* ! methought
Thou wert a stranger in these parts ? Ah, truant,
Some village beauty lured thee ;—thou art now
Grown constant ?

Mel. Trust me.

Pauline. Princes are so changeful !

Mel. Come, dearest, come.

Pauline. Shall I not call our people
To light us ?

Mel. Heaven will lend its stars for torches !
It is not far.

Pauline. The night breeze chills me.

Mel. Nay,

Let me thus mantle thee ;—it is not cold.

Pauline. Never beneath thy smile !

Mel. [*aside*]. O Heaven ! forgive me !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

MELNOTTE'S cottage—Widow bustling about—a table spread for supper.

Widow. So, I think that looks very neat. He sent me a line, so blotted that I can scarcely read it, to say he would be here almost immediately. She must have loved him well indeed to have forgotten his birth; for though he was introduced to her in disguise, he is too honourable not to have revealed to her the artifice, which her love only could forgive. Well, I do not wonder at it; for though my son is not a prince, he ought to be one, and that's almost as good. [*Knock at the door.*] Ah! here they are.

Enter MELNOTTE and PAULINE.

Widow. Oh, my boy—the pride of my heart!—welcome, welcome! I beg pardon, ma'am, but I do love him so!

Pauline. Good woman, I really—why prince, what is this?—does the old lady know you? Oh, I guess, you have done her some service. Another proof of your kind heart; is it not?

Mel. Of my kind heart, ay!

Pauline. So you know the prince?

Widow. Know him, madam?—Ah, I begin to fear it is you who know him not!

Pauline. Do you think she is mad? Can we stay here, my lord? I think there's something, very wild about her.

Mel. Madam, I—no, I cannot tell her ; my knees knock together : what a coward is a man who has lost his honour ! Speak to her—speak to her [*to his mother*]—tell her that—O Heaven, that I were dead !

Pauline. How confused he looks !—this strange place !—this woman—what can it mean ?—I half suspect—Who are you, madam !—who are you ? can't you speak ? are you struck dumb ?

Widow. Claude, you have not deceived her ?—Ah, shame upon you ! I thought that, before you went to the altar, she was to have known all.

Pauline. All ! what !—My blood freezes in my veins !

Widow. Poor lady !—dare I tell her, Claude ? [*MELNOTTE makes a sign of assent.*] Know you not then, madam, that this young man is of poor though honest parents ? Know you not that you are wedded to my son, Claude Melnotte ?

Pauline. Your son ! hold—hold ! do not speak to me.—[*Approaches MELNOTTE, and lays her hand on his arm.*] Is this a jest ? is it ? I know it is, only speak—one word—one look—one smile. I cannot believe—I who loved thee so—I cannot believe that thou art such a—No, I will not wrong thee by a harsh word—Speak !

Mel. Leave us—have pity on her, on me : leave us.

Widow. Oh, Claude, that I should live to see thee bowed by shame ! thee of whom I was so proud !

[*Exit by the staircase.*]

Pauline. Her son—her son !

Mel.

Now, lady, hear me.

Pauline.

Hear thee !

Ay, speak—her son ! have fiends a parent ? speak,
That thou mayst silence curses—speak !

Mel.

No, curse me :

Thy curse would blast me less than thy forgiveness.

Pauline [laughing wildly]. " This is thy palace, where
the perfumed light

Steals through the mist of alabaster lamps,

And every air is heavy with the sighs

Of orange-groves, and music from sweet lutes,

And murmurs of low fountains, that gush forth

I' the midst of roses ! " Dost thou like the picture ?

This is my bridal home, and *thou* my bridegroom.

O fool—O dupe—O wretch !—I see it all—

The by-word and the jeer of every tongue

In Lyons. Hast thou in thy heart one touch

Of human kindness ? if thou hast, why, kill me,

And save thy wife from madness. No, it cannot—

It cannot be : this is some horrid dream :

I shall wake soon.—[*Touching him.*] Art flesh ? art man ?
or but

The shadows seen in sleep ? It is too real.

What have I done to thee ? how sinn'd against thee,

That thou shouldst crush me thus ?

Mel.

Pauline, by pride

Angels have fallen ere thy time : by pride—

That sole alloy of thy most lovely mould—

The evil spirit of a bitter love,

And a revengeful heart, had power upon thee.

From my first years my soul was fill'd with thee :

I saw thee midst the flow'rs the lowly boy

Tended, unmark'd by thee—a spirit of bloom,

And joy, and freshness, as if Spring itself

Were made a living thing, and wore thy shape !

I saw thee, and the passionate heart of man

Enter'd the breast of the wild-dreaming boy.
And from that hour I grew—what to the last
I shall be—thine adorer ! Well, this love
Vain, frantic, guilty, if thou wilt, became
A fountain of ambition and bright hope ;
I thought of tales that by the winter hearth
Old gossips tell—how maidens sprung from kings
Have stoop'd from their high sphere ; how love, like death,
Levels all ranks, and lays the shepherd's crook
Beside the sceptre. Thus I made my home
In the soft palace of a fairy Future !
My father died ; and I, the peasant-born,
Was my own lord. Then did I seek to rise
Out of the prison of my mean estate ;
And, with such jewels as the exploring mind
Brings from the caves of knowledge, buy my ransom
From those twin gaolers of the daring heart—
Low birth and iron fortune. Thy bright image
Glass'd in my soul, took all the hues of glory,
And lured me on to those inspiring toils
By which man masters men ! For thee I grew
A midnight student o'er the dreams of sages.
For thee I sought to borrow from each grace,
And every muse, such attributes as lend
Ideal charms to love. I thought of thee,
And passion taught me poesy—of thee,
And on the painter's canvas grew the life
Of beauty ! Art became the shadow
Of the dear starlight of thy haunting eyes !
Men call'd me vain—some mad—I heeded not ;
But still toil'd on—hoped on—for it was sweet,
If not to win, to feel more worthy thee ?

Pauline. Has he a magic to exorcise hate !

Mel. At last, in one mad hour, I dared to pour
The thoughts that burst their channels into song,
And sent them to thee—such a tribute, lady,
As beauty rarely scorns, even from the meanest.
The name—appended by the burning heart
That long'd to show its idol what bright things
It had created—yea, the enthusiast's name,
That should have been thy triumph, was thy scorn !
That very hour—when passion, turn'd to wrath,
Resembled hatred most—when thy disdain
Made my whole soul a chaos—in that hour
The tempters found me a revengeful tool
For their revenge ! Thou hadst trampled on the worm—
It turn'd and stung thee !

Pauline. Love, sir, hath no sting.

What was the slight of a poor powerless girl
To the deep wrong of this most vile revenge ?
Oh, how I loved this man !—a serf !—a slave !

Mel. Hold, lady ! No, not slave ! Despair is free !
I will not tell thee of the throes—the struggles—
The anguish—the remorse : No, let it pass !
And let me come to such most poor atonement
Yet in my power. *Pauline !—*

[*Approaching her with great emotion, and about to take her hand.*]

Pauline. No, touch me not !

I know my fate. You are, by law, my tyrant ;
And I—O Heaven !—a peasant's wife ! I'll work—
Toil—drudge—do what thou wilt—but touch me not ;
Let my wrongs make me sacred !

Mel. Do not fear me.

Thou dost not know me, madam : at the altar

My vengeance ceased—my guilty oath expired !
Henceforth, no image of some marble saint,
Niched in cathedral aisles, is hallow'd more
From the rude hand of sacrilegious wrong.
I am thy husband—nay, thou need'st not shudder ;—
Here, at thy feet, I lay a husband's rights.
A marriage thus unholy—unfulfill'd—
A bond of fraud—is, by the laws of France,
Made void and null. To-night sleep—sleep in peace.
To-morrow, pure and virgin as this morn
I bore thee, bathed in blushes, from the shrine,
Thy father's arms shall take thee to thy home.
The law shall do thee justice, and restore
Thy right to bless another with thy love.
And when thou art happy, and hast half forgot
Him who so loved—so wrong'd thee, think at least
Heaven left some remnant of the angel still
In that poor peasant's nature !

Ho ! my mother !

Enter Widow.

Conduct this lady—(she is not my wife ;
She is our guest,—our honour'd guest, my mother)—
To the poor chamber, where the sleep of virtue,
Never, beneath my father's honest roof,
Ev'n villains dared to mar ! Now, lady, now,
I think thou wilt believe me. Go, my mother !

Widow. She is not thy wife !

Mel.

Hush, hush ! for mercy's sake !

Speak not, but go.

[*Widow ascends the stairs ; PAULINE follows weeping—turns to look back.*]

Mel. [*sinking down*]. All angels bless and guard her !

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

The cottage as before—MELNOTTE seated before a table—writing implements, &c.—(Day breaking.)

Mel. Hush, hush !—she sleeps at last !—thank Heaven, for a while she forgets even that I live ! Her sobs, which have gone to my heart the whole, long, desolate night, have ceased !—all calm—all still ! I will go now ; I will send this letter to Pauline's father : when he arrives, I will place in his hands my own consent to the divorce, and then, O France ! my country ! accept among thy protectors, thy defenders—the Peasant's Son ! Our country is less proud than custom, and does not refuse the blood, the heart, the right hand of the poor man.

Enter Widow.

Widow. My son, thou hast acted ill ; but sin brings its own punishment. In the hour of thy remorse, it is not for a mother to reproach thee.

Mel. What is past is past. There is a future left to all men, who have the virtue to repent, and the energy to atone. Thou shalt be proud of thy son yet. Meanwhile, remember this poor lady has been grievously injured. For the sake of thy son's conscience, respect, honour, bear with her. If she weep, console—if she chide, be silent. 'Tis but a little while more—I shall send an express fast as horse can speed to her father. Farewell ! I shall return shortly.

Widow. It is the only course left to thee—thou wert

led astray, but thou art not hardened. Thy heart is right still, as ever it was when, in thy most ambitious hopes, thou wert never ashamed of thy poor mother.

Mel. Ashamed of thee ! No, if I yet endure, yet live, yet hope—it is only because I would not die till I have redeemed the noble heritage I have lost—the heritage I took unstained from thee and my dead father—a proud conscience and an honest name. I shall win them back yet—Heaven bless you ! [*Exit.*

Widow. My dear Claude ! How my heart bleeds for him.

[*PAULINE looks down from above, and after a pause descends.*

Pauline. Not here !—he spares me that pain at least : so far he is considerate—yet the place seems still more desolate without him. Oh, that I could hate him—the gardener's son !—and yet how nobly he—no—no—no I will not be so mean a thing as to forgive him !

Widow. Good morning, madam ; I would have waited on you if I had known you were stirring.

Pauline. It is no matter, ma'am—your son's wife ought to wait on herself.

Widow. My son's wife—let not that thought vex you, madam—he tells me that you will have your divorce. And I hope I shall live to see him smile again. There are maidens in this village, young and fair, madam, who may yet console him.

Pauline. I dare say—they are very welcome—and when the divorce is got—he will marry again. I am sure I hope so. [*Weeps.*

Widow. He could have married the richest girl in the province, if he had pleased it ; but his head was turned poor child ! he could think of nothing but you. [*Weeps.*

Pauline. Don't weep, *mother*.

Widow. Ah, he has behaved very ill, I know, but love is so headstrong in the young. Don't weep, *madam*.

Pauline. So, as you were saying—go on.

Widow. Oh, I cannot excuse him, *ma'am*—he was not in his right senses.

Pauline. But he always—always [*sobbing*] loved—loved me then ?

Widow. He thought of nothing else. See here—he learnt to paint that he might take your likeness [*uncovers the picture*]. But that's all over now—I trust you have cured him of his folly ;—but, dear heart you have had no breakfast !

Pauline. I can't take anything—don't trouble yourself.

Widow. Nay, *madam*, be persuaded ; a little coffee will refresh you. Our milk and eggs are excellent. I will get out Claude's coffee-cup—it is of real Sèvres ; he saved up all his money to buy it three years ago, because the name of *Pauline* was inscribed on it.

Pauline. Three years ago ! Poor Claude !—Thank you ; I think I will have some coffee. Oh ! if he were but a poor gentleman, even a merchant : but a gardener's son—and what a home !—Oh no, it is too dreadful !

[*They seat themselves at the table, BEAUSEANT opens the lattice and looks in.*]

Beau. So—so—the coast is clear ! I saw Claude in the lane—I shall have an excellent opportunity.

[*Shuts the lattice and knocks at the door.*]

Pauline [*starting*]. Can it be my father ?—he has not sent for him yet ? No, he cannot be in such a hurry to get rid of me.

Widow. It is not time for your father to arrive yet ; it must be some neighbour.

Pauline. Don't admit any one.

[*Widow opens the door, BEAUSEANT pushes her aside and enters.*

Ha ! Heavens ! that hateful Beauseant ! This is indeed bitter !

Beau. Good morning, madam ! O widow, your son begs you will have the goodness to go to him in the village—he wants to speak to you on particular business ; you'll find him at the inn, or the grocer's shop, or the baker's, or at some other friend's of your family—make haste.

Pauline. Don't leave me, mother !—don't leave me.

Beau. [*with great respect*]. Be not alarmed, madam. Believe me your friend—your servant.

Pauline. Sir, I have no fear of you, even in this house ! Go, madam, if your son wishes it ; I will not contradict his commands whilst, at least, he has still the right to be obeyed.

Widow. I don't understand this ; however, I shan't be long gone. [*Exit.*

Pauline. Sir, I divine the object of your visit—you wish to exult in the humiliation of one who humbled you. Be it so ; I am prepared to endure all—even your presence !

Beau. You mistake me, madam—Pauline, you mistake me ! I come to lay my fortune at your feet. You must already be disenchanted with this impostor ; these walls are not worthy to be hallowed by your beauty ! Shall that form be clasped in the arms of a base-born

peasant? Beloved, beautiful Pauline! fly with me—my carriage waits without—I will bear you to a home more meet for your reception. Wealth, luxury, station—all shall yet be yours. I forg t your past disdain—I remember only your beauty and my unconquerable love!

Pauline. Sir! leave this house—it is humble: but a husband's roof, however lowly, is, in the eyes of God and man, the temple of a wife's honour! Know that I would rather starve—yes—with him who has betrayed me, than accept your lawful hand, even were you the prince whose name he bore!—Go.

Beau. What is not your pride humbled yet?

Pauline. Sir, what was pride in prosperity in affliction becomes virtue.

Beau. Look round: these rugged floors—these homely walls—this wretched struggle of poverty for comfort—think of this! and contrast with such a picture the refinement, the luxury, the pomp, that the wealthiest gentleman of Lyons offers to the loveliest lady. Ah, hear me!

Pauline. Oh! my father!—why did I leave you?—why am I thus friendless? Sir, you see before you a betrayed, injured, miserable woman!—respect her anguish!

[MELNOTTE opens the door silently, and pauses at the threshold.

Beau. No! let me rather thus console it; let me snatch from those lips one breath of that fragrance which never should be wasted on the low churl thy husband.

Pauline. Help! Claude!—Claude!—Have I no protector?

Beau. Be silent! [*showing a pistol.*] See, I do not come

unprepared even for violence. I will brave all things—thy husband and all his race—for thy sake. Thus, then, I clasp thee!

Mel. [*dashing him to the other end of the stage*]. Pauline—look up. Pauline! thou art safe.

Beau. [*levelling his pistol*]. Dare you thus insult a man of my birth, ruffian?

Pauline. Oh, spare him—spare my husband!—Beau-seant—Claude—no—no [*faints*].

Mel. Miserable trickster! shame upon you! brave devices to terrify a woman! Coward!—you tremble—you have outraged the laws—you know that your weapon is harmless—you have the courage of the mountebank, not the bravo!—Pauline, there is no danger.

Beau. I wish thou wert a gentleman—as it is, thou art beneath me.—Good day, and a happy honeymoon.—
[*Aside.*] I will not die till I am avenged. [*Exit.*

Mel. I hold her in these arms—the last embrace!
Never, ah never more, shall this dear head
Be pillow'd on the heart that should have shelter'd
And has betray'd!—Soft—soft! one kiss—poor wretch!
No scorn on that pale lip forbids me now!
One kiss—so ends all record of my crime!
It is the seal upon the tomb of hope,
By which, like some lost, sorrowing angel, sits
Sad memory evermore;—she breathes—she moves—
She wakes to scorn, to hate, but not to shudder
Beneath the touch of my abhorrèd love.

[*Places her on a seat.*

There—we are strangers now!

Pauline. All gone—all calm—
Is every thing a dream? thou art safe, unhurt—

I do not love thee ; but—but I am woman,
And—and—no blood is spilt ?

Mel.

No, lady, no ;

My guilt hath not deserved so rich a blessing
As even danger in thy cause.

Enter WIDOW.

Widow. My son, I have been everywhere in search of you ; why did you send for me ?

Mel. I did not send for you.

Widow. No ! but I must tell you your express has returned.

Mel. So soon ! impossible !

Widow. Yes, he met the lady's father and mother on the road ; they were going into the country on a visit. Your messenger says that Monsieur Deschappelles turned almost white with anger when he read your letter. They will be here almost immediately. Oh, Claude, Claude ! what will they do to you ? How I tremble ! Ah, madam ! do not let them injure him—if you knew how he doated on you.

Pauline. Injure him ! no, ma'am, be not afraid ;—my father ! how shall I meet him ? how go back to Lyons ? the scoff of the whole city ! Cruel, cruel, Claude [*in great agitation*]. Sir, you have acted most treacherously.

Mel. I know it, madam.

Pauline [*aside*]. If he would but ask me to forgive him !
—I never can forgive you, sir.

Mel. I never dared to hope it.

Pauline. But you are my husband now, and I have sworn to—to love you, sir.

Mel. That was under a false belief, madam ; Heaven and the laws will release you from your vow.

Pauline. He will drive me mad ! if he were but less proud—if he would but ask me to remain—hark, hark—I hear the wheels of the carriage—Sir—Claude, they are coming ; have you no word to say ere it is too late ? Quick—speak.

Mel. I can only congratulate you on your release. Behold your parents !

Enter MONSIEUR and MADAME DESCHAPPELLES and COLONEL DAMAS.

M. Deschap. My child ! my child !

Mme. Deschap. Oh, my poor Pauline !—what a villanous hovel this is ! Old woman, get me a chair—I shall faint—I certainly shall. What will the world say ? Child, you have been a fool. A mother's heart is easily broken.

Damas. Ha, ha ! most noble Prince—I am sorry to see a man of your quality in such a condition ; I am afraid your highness will go to the House of Correction.

Mel. Taunt on, sir ; I spared *you* when you were unarmed—I am unarmed now. A man who has no excuse for crime is indeed defenceless !

Damas. There's something fine in the rascal, after all !

M. Deschap. Where is the impostor ?—Are you thus shameless traitor ? Can you brave the presence of that girl's father ?

Mel. Strike me, if it please you—you *are* her father.

Pauline. Sir—sir, for my sake ;—whatever his guilt, he has acted nobly in atonement.

Mme. Deschap. Nobly ! Are you mad, girl ? I have no patience with you—to disgrace all your family thus !—Nobly ! Oh you abominable, hardened, pitiful, mean, ugly villain !

Damas. Ugly ! Why he was beautiful yesterday !

Pauline. Madame, this is his roof, and he is my husband. Respect your daughter, or let blame fall alone on her.

Mme. Deschap. You—you—Oh, I'm choking.

M. Deschap. Sir, it were idle to waste reproach upon a conscience like yours—you renounce all pretensions to the person of this lady ?

Mel. I do. [*Gives a paper.*] Here is my consent to a divorce—my full confession of the fraud which annuls the marriage. Your daughter has been foully wronged—I grant it, sir ; but her own lips will tell you that, from the hour in which she crossed this threshold, I returned to my own station, and respected hers. Pure and inviolate, as when yesternorn you laid your hand upon her head, and blessed her, I yield her back to you. For myself—I deliver you for ever from my presence. An outcast and a criminal, I seek some distant land, where I may mourn my sin, and pray for your daughter's peace. Farewell—farewell to you all, for ever !

Widow. Claude, Claude, you will not leave your poor old mother ? *She* does not disown you in your sorrow—no, not even in your guilt. No divorce can separate a mother from her son.

Pauline. This poor widow teaches me my duty. No, mother,—no, for you are now *my* mother also !—nor should any law, human or divine, separate the wife from her husband's sorrows. Claude—Claude—all is forgotten—forgiven—I am thine for ever !

Mme. Deschap. What do I hear ?—Come away, or never see my face again.

M. Deschap. Pauline, *we* never betrayed you !—do you forsake us for him ?

Pauline [going back to her father]. Oh no—but you will forgive him too ; we will live together—he shall be your son.

M. Deschap. Never ! Cling to him and forsake your parents ! His home shall be yours—his fortune yours—his fate yours : the wealth I have acquired by honest industry shall never enrich the dishonest man.

Pauline. And you would have a wife enjoy luxury while a husband toils ! Claude, take me ; thou canst not give me wealth, titles, station—but thou canst give me a true heart. I will work for thee, tend thee, bear with thee, and never, never shall these lips reproach thee for the past.

Damas. I'll be hanged if I am not going to blubber !

Mel. This is the heaviest blow of all !—What a heart I have wronged !—Do not fear me, sir ; I am not all hardened—I will not rob her of a holier love than mine. *Pauline* !—angel of love and mercy !—your memory shall lead me back to virtue !—The husband of a being so beautiful in her noble and sublime tenderness may be poor—may be low-born ;—(there is no guilt in the decrees of providence !)—but he should be one who can look thee in the face without a blush,—to whom thy love does not bring remorse,—who can fold thee to his heart, and say,—“*Here* there is no deceit !”—I am not that man !

Damas [aside to MELNOTTE]. Thou art a noble fellow, notwithstanding ; and wouldst make an excellent soldier. Serve in my regiment. I have had a letter from the Directory—our young general takes the command of the army in Italy,—I am to join him at Marseilles,—I will depart this day, if thou wilt go with me.

Mel. It is the favour I would have asked thee, if I dared. Place me wherever a foe is most dreaded,—wherever France most needs a life !

Damas. There shall not 'be a forlorn hope without thee !

Mel. There is my hand !—mother, your blessing. I shall see you again,—a better man than a prince,—a man who has bought the right to high thoughts by brave deeds. And thou !—thou ! so wildly worshipped, so guiltily betrayed,—all is not yet lost !—for thy memory, at least, must be mine till death ! If I live, the name of him thou hast once loved shall not rest dishonoured ;—if I fall, amidst the carnage and the roar of battle, my soul will fly back to thee, and love shall share with death my last sigh !—More—more would I speak to thee !—to pray !—to bless ! But no ;—When I am less unworthy I will utter it to Heaven !—I cannot trust myself to——[*turning to DESCHAPPELLES.*] Your pardon, sir ;—they are my last words—Farewell ! [Exit.

Damas. I will go after him.—France will thank me for this. [Exit.

Pauline [*starting from her father's arms*]. Claude !—Claude !—my husband !

M. Deschap. You have a father still !

ACT V.

Two years and a half from the date of Act IV.

SCENE I.

The Streets of Lyons.

Enter First, Second, and Third Officers.

First Officer. Well, here we are at Lyons, with gallant old Damas : it is his native place.

Second Officer. Yes ; he has gained a step in the army since he was here last. The Lyonnese ought to be very proud of stout General Damas.

Third Officer. Promotion is quick in the French army. This mysterious Morier,—the hero of Lodi, and the favourite of the commander-in-chief,—has risen to a colonel's rank in two years and a half.

Enter DAMAS, as a General.

Damas. Good morrow, gentlemen ; I hope you will amuse yourselves during our short stay at Lyons. It is a fine city : improved since I left it. Ah ! it is a pleasure to grow old,—when the years that bring decay to ourselves do but ripen the prosperity of our country. You have not met with Morier ?

First Officer. No : we were just speaking of him.

Second Officer. Pray, general, can you tell us who this Morier really is ?

Damas. Is !—why a colonel in the French army.

Third Officer. True. But what was he at first ?

Damas. At first? Why a baby in long clothes, I suppose.

First Officer. Ha, ha! Ever facetious, general.

Second Officer [to Third]. The general is sore upon this point; you will only chafe him.—Any commands, general?

Damas. None. Good day to you.

[*Exeunt Second and Third Officers.*]

Damas. Our comrades are very inquisitive. Poor Morier is the subject of a vast deal of curiosity.

First Officer. Say interest, rather, general. His constant melancholy, the loneliness of his habits,—his daring valour, his brilliant rise in the profession,—your friendship, and the favours of the commander-in-chief,—all tend to make him as much the matter of gossip as of admiration. But where is he, general? I have missed him all the morning.

Damas. Why, captain, I'll let you into a secret. My young friend has come with me to Lyons in hopes of finding a miracle.

First Officer. A miracle!

Damas. Yes, a miracle! in other words,—a constant woman.

First Officer. Oh! an affair of love!

Damas. Exactly so. No sooner did he enter Lyons than he waved his hand to me, threw himself from his horse, and is now, I warrant, asking every one who can know anything about the matter, whether a certain lady is still true to a certain gentleman!

First Officer. Success to him!—and of that success there can be no doubt. The gallant Colonel Morier, the hero of Lodi, might make his choice out of the proudest families in France.

Damas. Oh, if pride be a recommendation, the lady

and her mother are most handsomely endowed. By the way, captain, if you should chance to meet with Morier, tell him he will find me at the hotel.

First Officer. I will, general. [Exit.]

Damas. Now will I go to the Deschappelles, and make a report to my young Colonel. Ha ! by Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, Virorum,—here comes Monsieur Beauseant !

Enter BEAUSEANT.

Good morrow, Monsieur Beauseant ! How fares it with you ?

Beau. [aside]. Damas ! that is unfortunate ;—if the Italian campaign should have filled his pockets, he may seek to baffle me in the moment of my victory. [Aloud.] Your servant, general,—for such, I think, is your new distinction ! Just arrived in Lyons ?

Damas. Not an hour ago. Well, how go on the Deschappelles ? Have they forgiven you in that affair of young Melnotte ? You had some hand in that notable device,—eh ?

Beau. Why, less than you think for ! The fellow imposed upon me. I have set it all right now. What has become of him ? He could not have joined the army, after all. There is no such name in the books.

Damas. I know nothing about Melnotte. As you say, I never heard the name in the Grand Army.

Beau. Hem !—You are not married, general ?

Damas. Do I look like a married man, sir ?—No, thank Heaven ! My profession is to make widows, not wives.

Beau. You must have gained much booty in Italy ! Pauline will be your heiress—eh ?

Damas. Booty ! Not I ! Heiress to what ? Two trunks and a portmanteau,—four horses,—three swords,

—two suits of regimentals, and six pair of white leather inexpressibles ! A pretty fortune for a young lady !

Beau. [*aside*]. Then all is safe ! [*Aloud.*] Ha ! ha ! Is that really all your capital, General Damas ? Why, I thought Italy had been a second Mexico to you soldiers.

Damas. All a toss-up, sir. I was not one of the lucky ones ! My friend Morier, indeed, saved something handsome. But our commander-in-chief took care of him, and Morier is a thrifty, economical dog,—not like the rest of us soldiers, who spend our money as carelessly as if it were our blood.

Beau. Well, it is no matter ! I do not want fortune with Pauline. And you must know, General Damas, that your fair cousin has at length consented to reward my long and ardent attachment.

Damas. You !—the devil ! Why, she is already married ! There is no divorce !

Beau. True ; but this very day she is formally to authorize the necessary proceedings,—this very day she is to sign the contract that is to make her mine within one week from the day on which her present illegal marriage is annulled.

Damas. You tell me wonders !—Wonders ! No ; I believe anything of women !

Beau. I must wish you good morning.

[*As he is going, enter DESCHAPPELLES.*

M. Deschap. Oh, Beauseant ! well met. Let us come to the notary at once.

Damas [*to Deschap.*]. Why, cousin !

M. Deschap. Damas, welcome to Lyons. Pray call on us ; my wife will be delighted to see you.

Damas. Your wife be—blessed for her condescension ! But [*taking him aside*] what do I hear ? Is it possible that your daughter has consented to a divorce ?—that she will marry Monsieur Beauseant ?

M. Deschap. Certainly ! What have you to say against it ! A gentleman of birth, fortune, character. We are not so proud as we were ; even my wife has had enough of nobility and princes !

Damas. But Pauline loved that young man so tenderly !

M. Deschap. [*taking snuff*]. That was two years and a half ago !

Damas. Very true. Poor Melnotte !

M. Deschap. But do not talk of that impostor ; I hope he is dead or has left the country. Nay, even were he in Lyons at this moment, he ought to rejoice that, in an honourable and suitable alliance, my daughter may forget her sufferings and his crime.

Damas. Nay, if it be all settled, I have no more to say. Monsieur Beauseant informs me that the contract is to be signed this very day.

M. Deschap. It is ; at one o'clock precisely. Will you be one of the witnesses ?

Damas. I ?—No ; that is to say—yes, certainly !—at one o'clock I will wait on you.

M. Deschap. Till then, adieu—come Beauseant.

[*Exeunt BEAUSEANT and DESCHAPPELLES.*]

Damas. The man who sets his heart upon a woman
Is a chameleon, and doth feed on air ;
From air he takes his colours—holds his life,—
Changes with every wind,—grows lean or fat,
Rosy with hope, or green with jealousy,

Or pallid with despair—just as the gale
Varies from north to south—from heat to cold !
Oh, woman ! woman ! thou shouldst have few sins
Of thine own to answer for ! Thou art the author
Of such a book of follies in a man,
That it would need the tears of all the angels
To blot the record out !

Enter MELNOTTE, pale and agitated.

I need not tell thee ! Thou hast heard—

Mel.

The worst !

I have !

Damas. Be cheer'd ; others are fair as she is !

Mel. Others !—The world is crumbled at my feet !
She *was* my world ; fill'd up the whole of being—
Smiled in the sunshine—walk'd the glorious earth—
Sate in my heart—was the sweet life of life.
The Past was hers ; I dreamt not of a Future
That did not wear her shape ! Mem'ry and Hope
Alike are gone. Pauline is faithless ! Henceforth
The universal space is desolate !

Damas.

Hope yet.

Mel.

Hope, yes !—one hope is left me still—

A soldier's grave ! Glory has died with love.

I look into my heart, and, where I saw

Pauline, see Death !

[*After a pause*].—But am I not deceived ?

I went but by the rumour of the town ;

Rumour is false,—I was too hasty ! *Damas,*

Whom hast thou seen ?

Damas.

Thy rival and her father.

Arm thyself for the truth.—He heeds not—

Mel. She
Will never know how deeply she was loved !
The charitable night, that wont to bring
Comfort to-day, in bright and eloquent dreams,
Is henceforth leagued with misery ! Sleep, farewell,
Or else become eternal ! Oh, the waking
From false oblivion, and to see the sun,
And know she is another's !——

Damas. Be a man !

Mel. I am a man !—it is the sting of woe
Like mine that tells us we are men !

Damas. The false one
Did not deserve thee.

Mel. Hush !—No word against her !
Why should she keep, through years and silent absence,
The holy tablets of her virgin faith
True to a traitor's name ! Oh, blame her not ;
It were a sharper grief to think her worthless
Than to be what I am ! To-day,—to-day !
They said “To-day !” This day, so wildly welcomed—
This day, my soul had singled out of time
And mark'd for bliss ! This day ! oh, could I see her,
See her once more unknown ; but hear her voice.
So that one echo of its music might
Make ruin less appalling in its silence.

Damas. Easily done ! Come with me to her house ;
Your dress—your cloak—moustache—the bronzed hues
Of time and toil—the name you bear—belief
In your absence, all will ward away suspicion.
Keep in the shade. Ay, I would have you come.
There may be hope ! Pauline is yet so young,
They may have forced her to these second bridals

Out of mistaken love.

Mel.

No, bid me hope not !

Bid me not hope ! I could not bear again
To fall from such a heaven ! One gleam of sunshine,
And the ice breaks and I am lost ! Oh, Damas,
There's no such thing as courage in a man ;
The veriest slave that ever crawl'd from danger
Might spurn me now. When first I lost her, Damas,
I bore it, did I not ? I still had hope,
And now I—I—— [*Bursts into an agony of grief.*]

Damas.

What, comrade ! all the women

That ever smiled destruction on brave hearts
Were not worth tears like these !

Mel.

'Tis past—forget it.

I am prepared ; life has no further ills !
The cloud has broken in that stormy rain,
And on the waste I stand, alone with Heaven.

Damas. His very face is changed ; a breaking heart
Does its work soon !—Come, Melnotte, rouse thyself :
One effort more. Again thou'lt see her.

Mel.

See her !

There is a passion in that simple sentence
That shivers all the pride and power of reason
Into a chaos !

Damas.

Time wanes ;—come, ere yet

It be too late.

Mel.

Terrible words—“ *Too late !* ”

Lead on. One last look more, and then——

Damas.

Forget her !

Mel. Forget her ! yes.—For death remembers not.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A room in the house of MONSIEUR DESCHAPPELLES ; PAULINE seated in great dejection.

Pauline. It is so, then. I must be false to Love,
Or sacrifice a father ! Oh, my Claude,
My lover, and my husband ! Have I lived
To pray that thou mayst find some fairer boon
Than the deep faith of this devoted heart,—
Nourish'd till now—now broken ?

Enter MONSIEUR DESCHAPPELLES.

M. Deschap. My dear child,
How shall I thank—how bless thee ? Thou hast saved,
I will not say my fortune—I could bear
Reverse, and shrink not—but that prouder wealth
Which merchants value most—my name, my credit—
The hard-won honours of a toilsome life :—
These thou hast saved, my child !

Pauline. Is there no hope ?
No hope but this ?

M. Deschap. None. If, without the sum
Which Beauseant offers for thy hand, this day
Sinks to the west—to-morrow brings our ruin !
And hundreds, mingled in that ruin, curse
The bankrupt merchant ! and the insolvent herd
We feasted and made merry cry in scorn,
“ How pride has fallen !—Lo, the bankrupt merchant ! ”
My daughter, thou hast saved us !

Pauline.

And am lost !

M. Deschap. Come, let me hope that Beauseant's love—*Pauline.*

His love !

Talk not of love. Love has no thought of self !

Love buys not with the ruthless usurer's gold

The loathsome prostitution of a hand

Without a heart ? Love sacrifices all things

To bless the thing it loves ! *He* knows not love.

Father, his love is hate—his hope revenge !

My tears, my anguish, my remorse for falsehood—

These are the joys that he wrings from our despair !

M. Deschap. If thou deem'st thus, reject him ! Shame
and ruin

Were better than thy misery ;—think no more on't.

My sand is wellnigh run—what boots it when

The glass is broken ? We'll annul the contract :

And if to-morrow in the prisoner's cell

These aged limbs are laid, why still, my child,

I'll think thou art spared ; and wait the Liberal Hour

That lays the beggar by the side of kings !

Pauline. No—no—forgive me ! You, my honour'd
father,—

You, who so loved, so cherish'd me, whose lips

Never knew one harsh word ! I'm not ungrateful ;

I am but human !—hush ! *Now*, call the bridegroom—

You see I am prepared—no tears—all calm ;

But, father, *talk no more of love !**M. Deschap.*

My child,

'Tis but one struggle ; he is young, rich, noble ;

Thy state will rank first 'mid the dames of Lyons ;

And when this heart can shelter thee no more,

Thy youth will not be guardianless.

Pauline.

I have set

My foot upon the ploughshare—I will pass
The fiery ordeal. [*Aside.*] Merciful Heaven, support me!
And on the absent wanderer shed the light
Of happier stars—lost evermore to me?

*Enter MADAME DESCHAPPELLES, BEAUSEANT, GLAVIS,
and Notary.*

Mme. Deschap. Why, Pauline, you are quite in *déshabille*—you ought to be more alive to the importance of this joyful occasion. We had once looked higher, it is true ; but you see, after all, Monsieur Beauseant's father *was* a Marquis, and that's a great comfort. Pedigree and jointure!—you have them both in Monsieur Beauseant. A young lady decorously brought up should only have two considerations in her choice of a husband : first, is his birth honourable ? secondly, will his death be advantageous ? All other trifling details should be left to parental anxiety.

Beau. [*approaching and waving aside Madame*]. Ah, Pauline ! let me hope that you are reconciled to an event which confers such rapture upon me.

Pauline. I am reconciled to my doom.

Beau. Doom is a harsh word, sweet lady.

Pauline [*aside*]. This man must have some mercy—his heart cannot be marble. [*Aloud.*] Oh, sir, be just—be generous ! Seize a noble triumph—a great revenge ! Save the father, and spare the child.

Beau. [*aside*]. Joy—joy alike to my hatred and my passion ! The haughty Pauline is at last my suppliant. [*Aloud.*] You ask from me what I have not the sublime virtue to grant—a virtue reserved only for the gardener's

son ! I cannot forego my hopes in the moment of their fulfilment ! I adhere to the contract—your father's ruin or your hand.

Pauline. Then all is over. Sir, I have decided.

[*The clock strikes one.*]

Enter DAMAS and MELNOTTE.

Damas. Your servant, cousin Deschappelles. Let me introduce Colonel Morier.

Mme. Deschap. [*curtsying very low*]. What, the celebrated hero ? This is, indeed, an honour !

[*MELNOTTE bows, and remains in the background.*]

Damas [*to Pauline*]. My little cousin, I congratulate you. What, no smile—no blush ? You are going to be divorced from poor Melnotte, and marry this rich gentleman. You ought to be excessively happy !

Pauline. Happy !

Damas. Why, how pale you are, child !—Poor Pauline ! Hist—confide in me ! Do they force you to this ?

Pauline. No !

Damas. You act with your own free consent ?

Pauline. My own consent—yes.

Damas. Then you are the most—I will not say what you are.

Pauline. You think ill of me—be it so—yet if you knew all——

Damas. There is some mystery—speak out, Pauline.

Pauline [*suddenly*]. Oh, perhaps you can save me ! you are our relation—our friend. My father is on the verge of bankruptcy—this day he requires a large sum to meet demands that cannot be denied ; that sum Beauseant will advance—this hand the condition of the barter. Save

me if you have the means—save me ! You will be repaid above !

Damas [*aside*]. I recant—Women are not so bad after all ! [*Aloud.*] Humph, child ! I cannot help you—I am too poor.

Pauline. The last plank to which I clung is shivered.

Damas. Hold—you see my friend Morier : Melnotte is his most intimate friend—fought in the same fields—slept in the same tent. Have you any message to send to Melnotte ? any word to soften this blow ?

Pauline. He knows Melnotte—he will see him—he will bear to him my last farewell—[*approaches MELNOTTE*]—He has a stern air—he turns away from me—he despises me !—Sir, one word I beseech you.

Mel. Her voice again ! How the old time comes o'er me !

Damas [*to Madame*]. Don't interrupt them. He is going to tell her what a rascal young Melnotte is ; he knows him well, I promise you.

Mme. Deschap. So considerate in you, cousin Damas !

[*DAMAS approaches DESCHAPPELLES ; converses apart with him in dumb show—DESCHAPPELLES shows him a paper, which he inspects and takes.*]

Pauline. Thrice have I sought to speak ; my courage fails me.—

Sir, is it true that you have known—nay, are
The friend of—Melnotte ?

Mel. Lady, yes !—Myself
And misery know the man !

Pauline. And you will see him,
And you will bear to him—ay—word for word,
All that this heart, which breaks in parting from him,
Would send, ere still for ever ?

Mel. He hath told me
You have the right to choose from out the world
A worthier bridegroom ;—he foregoes all claim,
Even to murmur at his doom. Speak on !

Pauline. Tell him, for years I never nursed a thought
That was not his ;—that on his wandering way,
Daily and nightly, pour'd a mourner's prayers.
Tell him, ev'n now that I would rather share
His lowliest lot,—walk by his side, an outcast,—
Work for him, beg with him,—live upon the light
Of one kind smile from him,—than wear the crown
The Bourbon lost !

Mel. [*aside*]. Am I already mad ?
And does delirium utter such sweet words
Into a dreamer's ear ? [*Aloud*]. You love him thus,
And yet desert him ?

Pauline. Say, that, if his eye
Could read this heart,—its struggles, its temptations,—
His love itself would pardon that desertion !
Look on that poor old man,—he is my father ;
He stands upon the verge of an abyss !—
He calls his child to save him ! Shall I shrink
From him who gave me birth ?—withhold my hand,
And see a parent perish ? Tell him this,
And say—that we shall meet again in Heaven !

Mel. Lady—I—I—what is this riddle ?—what
The nature of this sacrifice ?

Pauline [*pointing to DAMAS*]. Go, ask him !

Beau. [*from the table*]. The papers are prepared—we
only need
Your hand and seal.

Mel. Stay, lady—one word more.

Were but your duty with your faith united,
Would you still share the low-born peasant's lot ?

Pauline. Would I ? Ah, better death with him I love
Than all the pomp—which is but as the flowers
That crown the victim !—[*Turning away.*] I am ready.

[*MELNOTTE rushes to DAMAS.*

Damas.

There—

This is the schedule—this the total.

Beau. [to DESCHAPPELLES, showing notes]. These
Are yours the instant she has sign'd ; you are
Still the great House of Lyons !

[*The Notary is about to hand the contract to PAULINE, when
MELNOTTE seizes it and tears it.*

Beau. Are you mad ?

M. Deschap. How, sir ! What means this insult ?

Mel. Peace, old man !

I have a prior claim. Before the face
Of man and Heaven I urge it ; I outbid
Yon sordid huckster for your priceless jewel.

[*Giving a pocket-book.*

There is the sum twice told ! Blush not to take it :
There's not a coin that is not bought and hallow'd
In the cause of nations with a soldier's blood !

Beau. Torments and death !

Pauline. That voice ! Thou art—

Mel. Thy husband !

[*PAULINE rushes into his arms.*

Look up ! Look up, Pauline !—for I can bear
Thine eyes ! The stain is blotted from my name.
I have redeem'd mine honour. I can call
On France to sanction thy divine forgiveness !

Oh, joy !—Oh, rapture ! By the midnight watchfires
Thus have I seen thee ! thus foretold this hour !
And 'midst the roar of battle, thus have heard
The beating of thy heart against my own !

Beau. Fool'd, duped, and triumph'd over in the hour
Of mine own victory ! Curses on ye both !
May thorns be planted in the marriage-bed !
And love grow sour'd and blacken'd into hate—
Such as the hate that gnaws me !

Damas. Curse away !
And let me tell thee, Beauseant, a wise proverb
The Arabs have,—“Curses are like young chickens,
[*Solemnly.*] And still come home to roost !”

Beau. Their happiness
Maddens my soul ! I am powerless and revengeless !
[*To MADAME.*

I wish you joy ! Ha ! ha ! the gardener's son ! [*Exit.*

Damas [*to GLAVIS*]. Your friend intends to hang
himself ! Methinks

You ought to be his travelling companion !

Gla. Sir, you are exceedingly obliging ! [*Exit.*

Pauline. Oh !

My father, you are saved,—and by my husband !

Ah, blessed hour ?

Mel. Yet you weep still, Pauline !

Pauline. But on thy breast !—these tears are sweet
and holy !

M. Deschap. You have won love and honour nobly,
sir !

Take her ;—be happy both !

Mme. Deschap. I'm all astonish'd !

Who, then, is Colonel Morier ?

Damas.

You behold him !

Mel. Morier no more after this happy day !

I would not bear again my father's name
Till I could deem it spotless ! The hour's come !
Heaven smiled on conscience ! As the soldier rose
From rank to rank, how sacred was the fame
That cancell'd crime, and raised him nearer thee !

Mme. Deschap. A colonel and a hero ! Well, that's
something !

He's wondrously improved ! I wish you joy, sir !

Mel. Ah ! the same love that tempts us into sin,
If it be true love, works out its redemption ;
And he who seeks repentance for the Past
Should woo the Angel Virtue in the future.

RICHELIEU;
OR,
THE CONSPIRACY.

“ Le Comte de Soissons, et le Duc de Bouillon, avaient une bonne armée, et ils savaient la conduire ; et pour plus grande sûreté, tandis que cette armée devait s'avancer, on devait assassiner le Cardinal et faire soulever Paris. . . Les Conjurés faisaient un traité avec l'Espagne pour introduire des troupes en France, et pour y mettre tout en confusion dans une Régence qu'on croyait prochaine, et dont chacun espérait profiter. . . Richelieu avait perdu toute sa faveur, et ne conservait que l'avantage d'être nécessaire. Le bonheur du Cardinal voulut encore que le complot fut découvert, et qu'une copie du traité lui tombât entre les mains.”
— *Voltaire, Hist. Gen.*

PREFACE.

THE administration of Cardinal Richelieu, whom (despite all his darker qualities) Voltaire and history justly consider the true architect of the French monarchy, and the great parent of French civilization, is characterised by features alike tragic and comic. A weak king—an ambitious favourite ; a despicable conspiracy against the minister, nearly always associated with a dangerous treason against the State—these, with little variety of names and dates, constitute the eventful cycle through which, with a dazzling ease, and an arrogant confidence, the great luminary fulfilled its destinies. Blent together, in startling contrast, we see the grandest achievements and the pettiest agents ;—the spy—the mistress—the capuchin ;—the destruction of feudalism ;—the humiliation of Austria ;—the dismemberment of Spain.

Richelieu himself is still what he was in his own day—a man of two characters. If, on the one hand, he is justly represented as inflexible and vindictive, crafty and unscrupulous ; so, on the other, it cannot be denied that he was placed in times in which the long impunity of every license required stern examples—that he was beset by perils and intrigues, which gave a certain excuse to the subtlest inventions of self-defence—that his ambition was inseparably connected with a passionate love for the glory of his country—and that, if he was her dictator, he was not less her benefactor. It has been fairly remarked, by the most impartial historians, that he was no less generous to merit than severe to crime—that, in the various departments of the State, the Army, and the Church, he selected and distinguished the ablest aspirants—that the wars which he con-

ducted were, for the most part, essential to the preservation of France, and Europe itself, from the formidable encroachments of the Austrian House—that, in spite of those wars, the people were not oppressed with exorbitant imposts—and that he left the kingdom he had governed in a more flourishing and vigorous state than at any former period of the French history, or at the decease of Louis XIV.

The cabals formed against this great statesman were not carried on by the patriotism of public virtue, or the emulation of equal talent : they were but court struggles, in which the most worthless agents had recourse to the most desperate means. In each, as I have before observed, we see combined the twofold attempt to murder the minister and to betray the country. Such, then, are the agents, and such the designs with which truth, in the drama as in history, requires us to contrast the celebrated Cardinal ;—not disguising his foibles or his vices, but not unjust to the grander qualities (especially the love of country), by which they were often dignified, and, at times, redeemed.

The historical drama is the concentration of historical events. In the attempt to place upon the stage the picture of an era, that license with dates and details, which Poetry permits, and which the highest authorities in the Drama of France herself have sanctioned, has been, though not unsparingly, indulged. The conspiracy of the Duc de Bouillon is, for instance, amalgamated with the *denouement* of *The Day of Dupes* ; * and circumstances connected with the treason of Cinq Mars (whose brilliant youth and gloomy catastrophe tend to subvert poetic and historic justice, by seducing us to forget his base ingratitude and his perfidious apostasy) are identified with the fate of the earlier favourite Baradas, † whose sudden rise and

* “Le Cardinal se croit perdu, et prépare sa retraite. Ses amis lui conseillent de tenter enfin auprès du Roi un nouvel effort. Le Cardinal va trouver le Roi à Versailles. Le Roi, qui avait sacrifié son ministre par faiblesse, se remit par faiblesse entre ses mains, et il lui abandonne ceux qui l'avaient perdu. Ce jour qui est encore à présent appelé *La Journée des Dupes*, fut celui du pouvoir absolu du Cardinal.”—*Voltaire, Hist. Gen.*

† “En six mois il (le Roi) fit (Baradas) premier Ecuyer, premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre, Capitaine de St. Germain, et Lieutenant

as sudden fall passed into a proverb. I ought to add, that the noble romance of "Cinq Mars" suggested one of the scenes in the fifth act; and that for the conception of some portion of the intrigue connected with De Mauprat and Julie, I am, with great alterations of incident, and considerable if not entire reconstruction of character, indebted to an early and admirable novel by the author of "Picciola." *

LONDON, *March* 1839.

de Roi, en Champagne. En moins de temps encore, on lui ôta tout, et des débris de sa grandeur, à peine lui resta-t-il de quoi payer ses dettes : de sorte que pour signifier une grande fortune dissipée aussi qu'acquise on disait en commun proverbe, *Fortune de Baradas*." —*Anquetil*.

* It may be as well, however, to caution the English reader against some of the impressions which the eloquence of both the writers I refer to are calculated to leave. They have exaggerated the more evil, and have kept out of sight the nobler qualities of the Cardinal.

NOTE.

THE length of the play necessarily requires curtailments on the stage—the principal of which are enclosed within brackets. Many of the passages thus omitted, however immaterial to the audience, must obviously be such as the *reader* would be least inclined to dispense with—viz., those which, without being absolutely essential to the business of the stage, contain either the subtler strokes of character, or the more poetical embellishments of description. An important consequence of these suppressions is, that Richelieu himself is left, too often and too unrelievedly, to positions which place him in an *amiable* light, without that shadowing forth of his more sinister motives and his fiercer qualities, which is attempted in the written play. Thus, the *character* takes a degree of credit due only to the *situation*. To judge the author's conception of Richelieu fairly, and to estimate how far it is consistent with historical portraiture, the play must be *read*.

TO
THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE, K.G.,
&c., &c.,

THIS DRAMA

IS INSCRIBED,

IN TRIBUTE TO THE TALENTS WHICH COMMAND, AND THE
QUALITIES WHICH ENDEAR, RESPECT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH.

GASTON, DUKE OF ORLEANS, *brother to Louis XIII.*

BARADAS, *favourite of the King, First Gentleman of the Chamber, Premier Ecuyer, &c.*

CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

THE CHEVALIER DE MAUPRAT.

THE SIEUR DE BERINGHEN, *in attendance on the King,**
one of the Conspirators.

JOSEPH, *a Capuchin, Richelieu's confidant.*

HUGUET, *an officer of Richelieu's household guard—a Spy.*

FRANÇOIS, *First Page to Richelieu.*

FIRST COURTIER.

CAPTAIN OF THE ARCHERS.

FIRST, SECOND, THIRD SECRETARIES OF STATE.

GOVERNOR OF THE BASTILE.

GAOLER.

Courtiers, Pages, Conspirators, Officers, Soldiers, &c.

JULIE DE MORTEMAR, *an Orphan, ward to Richelieu.*

MARIAN DE LORME, *Mistress to Orleans, but in Richelieu's pay.*

* Properly speaking, the King's First Valet de Chambre—a post of great importance at that time.

RICHELIEU;

OR,

THE CONSPIRACY.

ACT I.

FIRST DAY.

SCENE I.—*A room in the house of MARION DE LORME ; a table towards the front of the stage (with wine, fruits, &c.), at which are seated BARADAS, Four Courtiers, splendidly dressed in the costume of 1641-2 ;—the DUKE OF ORLEANS reclining on a large fauteuil ;—MARION DE LORME standing at the back of his chair, offers him a goblet, and then retires. At another table, DE BERINGHEN, DE MAUPRAT, playing at dice ; other Courtiers, of inferior rank to those at the table of the Duke, looking on.*

Orle. [*drinking*]. Here's to our enterprise !

Bar. [*glancing at MARION*]. Hush, sir !

Orle. [*aside*], Nay, Count,

You may trust her ; she doats on me ; no house
So safe as Marion's. * [*At our statelier homes*
The very walls do play the eaves-dropper.
There's not a sunbeam creeping o'er our floors
But seems a glance from that malignant eye

* The passages enclosed in brackets are omitted in representation.

Which reigns o'er France ; our fatal greatness lives
In the sharp glare of one relentless day.

But Richelieu's self forgets to fear the sword
The myrtle hides ; and Marion's silken robe
Casts its kind charity o'er fiercer sins
Than those which haunt the rosy path between
The lip and eye of beauty.—Oh, no house
So safe as Marion's.]

Bar. Still, we have a secret.
And oil and water—woman and a secret—
Are hostile properties.

Orle. Well—Marion, see
How the play prospers yonder.

[MARION goes to the next table, looks on for a few moments
then exit.]

Bar. [*producing a parchment*]. I have now
All the conditions drawn ; it only needs
Our signatures : upon receipt of this,
(Whereto is join'd the schedule of our treaty
With the Count-Duke,* the Richelieu of the Escorial,)
Bouillon will join his army with the Spaniard,
March on to Paris,—there, dethrone the King :
You will be Regent ; I, and ye, my Lords,
Form the new Council. So much for the core
Of our great scheme.

Orle. But Richelieu is an Argus ;
One of his hundred eyes will light upon us,
And then—good-bye to life.

Bar. To gain the prize
We must destroy the Argus :—ay, my Lords,

* Olivares, Minister of Spain.

The scroll the core, but blood must fill the veins,
 Of our design ;—while this despatch'd to Bouillon,
 Richelieu despatch'd to heaven !—The last *my* charge.
 Meet here to-morrow night. *You*, sir, as first
 In honour and in hope, meanwhile select
 Some trusty knave to bear the scroll to Bouillon ;
 Midst Richelieu's foes *I'll* find some desperate hand
 To strike for vengeance, while we stride to power.

Orle. So be it ;—to-morrow, midnight. Come, my
 Lords.

[*Exeunt ORLEANS, and the Courtiers in his train. Those at
 the other table rise, salute ORLEANS, and reseal themselves.*]

De Ber. Double the stakes.

De Mau. Done.

De Ber. Bravo ; faith, it shames me

To bleed a purse already *in extremis*.

De Mau. Nay, as you've had the patient to yourself
 So long, no other doctor should despatch it.

[*DE MAUPRAT throws and loses.*]

Omnes. Lost ! Ha, ha !—poor De Mauprat !

De Ber. One throw more ?

De Mau. No ; I am bankrupt [*pushing gold*]. There
 goes all—except

My honour and my sword. [*They rise.*]

De Ber. Long cloaks and honour

Went out of vogue together, when we found
 We got on much more rapidly without them ;
 The sword, indeed, is never out of fashion,—
 The devil has care of *that*.

First Gamester. Ay, take the sword
 To Cardinal Richelieu :—he gives gold for steel,
 When worn by brave men.

De Mau.

Richelieu !

De Ber. [to BARADAS].

At that name

He changes colour, bites his nether lip.

Ev'n in his brightest moments whisper "Richelieu,"

And you cloud all his sunshine.

Bar.

I have mark'd it,

And I will learn the wherefore.

De Mau.

The Egyptian

Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught :

Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,

And drain it thus.

[*Drinking.*]*De Ber.*

Come, gentlemen, what say ye,

A walk on the parade ?

Omnes.

Ay ; come, De Mauprat.

De Mau. Pardon me ; we shall meet again ere nightfall.*Bar.* I'll stay and comfort Mauprat.*De Ber.*

Comfort !—when

We gallant fellows have run out a friend,

There's nothing left—except to run him through !

There's the last act of friendship.

De Mau.

Let me keep

That favour in reserve ; in all beside

Your most obedient servant.

[*Exeunt DE BERINGHEN, &c. Manent DE MAUPRAT
and BARADAS.*]*Bar.*

You have lost—

You are not sad.

De Mau.

Sad !—Life and gold have wings,

And must fly one day :—open, then, their cages

And wish them merry.

Bar.

You're a strange enigma :—

Fiery in war—and yet to glory lukewarm ;

All mirth in action—in repose all gloom—
 These are extremes in which the unconscious heart
 Betrays the fever of deep-fix'd disease.
 Confide in me ! our young days roll'd together
 In the same river, glassing the same stars
 That smile i' the heaven of hope ;—alike we made
 Bright-wingèd steeds of our unform'd chimeras,
 Spurring the fancies upward to the air,
 Wherein we shaped fair castles from the cloud.
 Fortune of late has sever'd us—and led
Me to the rank of Courtier, Count and Favourite,—
You to the titles of the wildest gallant
 And bravest knight in France ;—are you content ?
 No ;—trust in me—some gloomy secret——

De Mau.

Ay :—

A secret that doth haunt me, as, of old,
 Men were possess'd of fiends !—Where'er I turn,
 The grave yawns dark before me !—*I will* trust you ;—
 Hating the Cardinal, and beguiled by Orleans,
 You know I join'd the Languedoc revolt—
 Was captured—sent to the Bastile——

Bar.

But shared

The general pardon, which the Duke of Orleans
 Won for himself and all in the revolt,
 Who but obey'd his orders.

De Mau.

Note the phrase ;—

“*Obey'd his orders.*” Well, when on my way
 To join the duke in Languedoc, I (then
 The down upon my lip—less man than boy)
 Leading young valours—reckless as myself,
 Seized on the town of Faviaux, and displaced
 The royal banners for the rebel. Orleans

(Never too daring,) when I reach'd the camp,
Blamed me for acting—mark—*without his orders* :
Upon this quibble Richelieu razed my name
Out of the general pardon.

Bar. Yet released you
From the Bastile——

De Mau. To call me to his presence,
And thus address me :—“ You have seized a town
Of France, without the orders of your leader,
And for this treason, but one sentence—DEATH.”

Bar. Death !

De Mau. “ I have pity on your youth and birth,
Nor wish to glut the headsman ;—join your troop,
Now on the march against the Spaniards ;—change
The traitor's scaffold for the soldier's grave ;—
Your memory stainless — they who shared your
crime

Exiled or dead—your king shall never learn it.”

Bar. O tender pity !—O most charming prospect !
Blown into atoms by a bomb, or drill'd
Into a cullender by gunshot !—Well ?—

De Mau. You have heard if I fought bravely.—Death
became
Desired as Daphne by the eager Daygod.
Like him I chased the nymph—to grasp the laurel !
I could not die !

Bar. Poor fellow !

De Mau. When the Cardinal
Review'd the troops—his eye met mine ;—he frown'd,
Summon'd me forth—“ How's this !” quoth he ; “ you
have shunn'd
The sword.—beware the axe !—'twill fall one day !”

He left me thus—we were recall'd to Paris,
And—you know all !

Bar. And, knowing this, why halt you,
Spell'd by the rattle-snake,—while in the breasts
Of your firm friends beat hearts, that vow the death
Of your grim tyrant ?—Wake !—Be one of us ;
The time invites—the king detests the Cardinal,
Dares not disgrace—but groans to be deliver'd
Of that too great a subject—join your friends,
Free France, and save yourself.

De Mau. Hush ! Richelieu bears
A charmed life ;—to all, who have braved his power,
One common end—the block.

Bar. Nay, if he live,
The block your doom ;—

De Mau. Better the victim, Count,
Than the assassin.—France requires a Richelieu,
But does not need a Mauprat. Truce to this ;—
All time one midnight, where my thoughts are
spectres.

What to my fame ?—What love ?—

Bar. Yet dost thou love *not* ?

De Mau. Love ?—I am young——

Bar. And Julie fair ! [*Aside.*] It is so,
Upon the margin of the grave—his hand
Would pluck the rose that I would win and wear !
[*Aloud.*]—[Thou lov'st—

De Mau. Who, lonely in the midnight tent,
Gazed on the watch-fires in the sleepless air,
Nor chose one star amidst the clustering hosts
To bless it in the name of some fair face
Set in his spirit, as that star in Heaven ?

For our divine affections, like the spheres,
Move ever, ever musical.

Bar. You speak
As one who fed on poetry.

De Mau. Why, man,
The thoughts of lovers stir with poetry
As leaves with summer-wind.—The heart that loves
Dwells in an Eden, hearing angel-lutes,
As Eve in the First Garden. Hast thou seen
My Julie, and not felt it henceforth dull
To live in the common world—and talk in words
That clothe the feelings of the frigid herd?—
Upon the perfumed pillow of her lips—
As on his native bed of roses flushed
With Paphian skies—Love smiling sleeps :—Her voice
The blest interpreter of thoughts as pure
As virgin wells where Dian takes delight,
Or fairies dip their changelings !—In the maze
Of her harmonious beauties—Modesty
(Like some severer grace that leads the choir
Of her sweet sisters) every airy motion
Attunes to such chaste charm, that Passion holds
His burning breath, and will not with a sigh
Dissolve the spell that binds him !—Oh those eyes
That woo the earth—shadowing more soul than lurks
Under the lids of Psyche !—Go !—thy lip
Curls at the purfled phrases of a lover—
Love thou, and if thy love be deep as mine,
Thou wilt not laugh at poets.

Bar. [aside]. With each word
Thou wak'st a jealous demon in my heart,
And my hand clutches at my hilt.—]

De Mau. [*gaily*].

No more !—

I love !—Your breast holds both my secrets !—Never
Unbury either !—Come, while yet we may,
We'll bask us in the noon of rosy life :—
Lounge through the gardens,—flaunt it in the taverns,—
Laugh, — game, — drink, — feast :— If so confined my
days,

Faith, I'll enclose the nights.—Pshaw ! not so grave ;
I'm a true Frenchman !—*Vive la bagatelle !*

[*As they are going out, enter HUGUET and four Arquebusiers.*

Hug. Messire De Mauprat,—I arrest you !—Follow
To the Lord Cardinal.

De Mau.

You see, my friend,

I'm out of my suspense !—the tiger's play'd
Long enough with his prey.—Farewell !—Hereafter
Say, when men name me, “ Adrien de Mauprat
Lived without hope, and perish'd without fear ! ”

[*Exeunt DE MAUPRAT, HUGUET, &c.*

Bar. Farewell !—I trust for ever ! I design'd thee
For Richelieu's murderer——but, as well his martyr !
In childhood you the stronger—and I cursed you ;
In youth the fairer—and I cursed you still ;
And now my rival !—While the name of Julie
Hung on thy lips—I smiled—for then I saw,
In my mind's eye, the cold and grinning Death
Hang o'er thy head the pall !—Ambition, Love,
Ye twin-born stars of daring destinies,
Sit in my house of Life !—By the king's aid
I will be Julie's husband—in despite
Of my Lord Cardinal !—by the king's aid
I will be minister of France—in spite

Of my Lord Cardinal !—And then—what then ?
The king loves Julie—feeble prince—false master—

[*Producing and gazing on the parchment.*

Then, by the aid of Bouillon, and the Spaniard,
I will dethrone the king ; and all—ha !—ha !—
All, in despite of my Lord Cardinal !

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A room in the Palais Cardinal, the walls hung with arras. A large screen in one corner. A table covered with books, papers, &c. A rude clock in a recess. Busts, statues, book-cases, weapons of different periods and banners suspended over RICHELIEU'S chair.

RICHELIEU and JOSEPH.

Rich. And so you think this new conspiracy
The craftiest trap yet laid for the old fox ?——
Fox !—Well, I like the nickname ! What did Plutarch
Say of the Greek Lysander ?

Joseph. I forget.

Rich. That where the lion's skin fell short, he eked it
Out with the fox's ! A great statesman, Joseph,
That same Lysander !

Joseph. Orleans heads the traitors.

Rich. A very wooden head, then ! Well ?

Joseph. The favourite,
Count Baradas—

Rich. A weed of hasty growth ;
First gentleman of the chamber—titles, lands,
And the king's ear !—It cost me six long winters
To mount as high, as in six little moons .

This painted lizard——But I hold the ladder,
And when I shake—he falls ! What more ?

Joseph.

A scheme

To make your orphan-ward an instrument
To aid your foes. You placed her with the queen,
One of the royal chamber,—as a watch
I' th' enemy's quarters—

Rich.

And the silly child

Visits me daily,—calls me “Father,”—prays
Kind Heaven to bless me—And for all the rest
As well have placed a doll about the queen !
She does not heed who frowns—who smiles ; with whom
The king confers in whispers ; notes not when
Men who last week were foes, are found in corners
Mysteriously affectionate ; words spoken
Within closed doors she never hears ;—by chance
Taking the air at keyholes—Senseless puppet !
No ears—nor eyes !—and yet she says, “She loves me !”
Go on——

Joseph. Your ward has charm'd the king——

Rich.

Out on you !

Have I not, one by one, from such fair shoots
Pluck'd the insidious ivy of his love ?
And shall it creep around my blossoming tree
Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music
That spirits in Heaven might hear ? They're sinful, too,
Those passionate surfeits of the rampant flesh,
The church condemns them ; and to us, my Joseph,
The props and pillars of the church, most hurtful.
The king is weak—whoever the king loves
Must rule the king ; the lady loves another,
The other rules the lady—thus we're balk'd

Of our own proper sway—The king must have
No goddess but the State :—the State—that's Richelieu !

Joseph. This not the worst ;—Louis, in all decorous,
And deeming you her least compliant guardian,
Would veil his suit by marriage with his minion,
Your prosperous foe, Count Baradas !

Rich.

Ha ! ha !

I have another bride for Baradas.

Joseph. You, my lord ?

Rich.

Ay—more faithful than the love

Of fickle woman :—when the head lies lowliest,
Clasping him fondest ;—Sorrow never knew
So sure a soother,—and her bed is stainless !

Joseph [*aside*]. If of the grave he speaks, I do not wonder
That priests are bachelors !

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Fran.

Mademoiselle de Mortemar.

Rich. Most opportune—admit her. [*Exit FRANÇOIS.*

In my closet

You'll find a rosary, Joseph ; ere you tell
Three hundred beads, I'll summon you. Stay, Joseph ;—
I did omit an Ave in my matins,—
A grievous fault ;—atone it for me, Joseph ;
There is a scourge within ; I am weak, you strong.
It were but charity to take my sin
On such broad shoulders. Exercise is healthful.

Joseph. I ! guilty of such criminal presumption
As to mistake myself for you—No, never !
Think it not ! [*Aside.*] Troth, a pleasant invitation !

[*Exit JOSEPH.*

Enter JULIE DE MORTEMAR.

Rich. That's my sweet Julie !—why, upon this face

Blushes such daybreak, one might swear the morning
Were come to visit Tithon.

Julie [*placing herself at his feet*]. Are you gracious?—
May I say “Father?”

Rich. Now and ever!

Julie. Father!

A sweet word to an orphan.

Rich. No; not orphan

While Richelieu lives; thy father loved me well;
My friend, ere I had flatterers (now, I’m great,
In other phrase, I’m friendless)—he died young
In years, not service, and bequeath’d thee to me;
And thou shalt have a dowry, girl, to buy
Thy mate amidst the mightiest. Drooping?—sighs?
Art thou not happy at the court?

Julie. Not often.

Rich. [*aside*]. Can she love Baradas? Ah! at thy
heart

There’s what can smile and sigh, blush and grow pale,
All in a breath? Thou art admired—art young;
Does not his majesty commend thy beauty—
Ask thee to sing to him?—and swear such sounds
Had smooth’d the brows of Saul?

Julie. He’s very tiresome,

Our worthy king.

Rich. Fie! kings are never tiresome,
Save to their ministers. What courtly gallants
Charm ladies most?—De Sourdiac, Longueville, or
The favourite Baradas?

Julie. A smileless man—

I fear and shun him.

Rich. Yet he courts thee?

Julie.

Then

He is more tiresome than his Majesty.

Rich. Right, girl, shun Baradas. Yet of these flowers
Of France, not one, in whose more honied breath
Thy heart hears summer whisper ?

*Enter HUGUET.**Hug.*

The Chevalier

De Mauprat waits below.

Julie [*starting up*].

De Mauprat !

Rich.

Hem !

He has been tiresome too !—Anon. [*Exit HUGUET.*

Julie.

What doth he ?—

I mean—I—Does your Eminence—that is—

Know you Messire de Mauprat ?

Rich.

Well !—and you—

Has he address'd you often ?

Julie.

Often !—No—

Nine times ;—nay, ten ; the last time, by the lattice
Of the great staircase. [*In a melancholy tone.*] The Court
sees him rarely.

Rich. A bold and forward royster !*Julie.**He ?* nay, modest,

Gentle, and sad, methinks.

Rich.

Wears gold and azure ?

Julie. No ; sable.*Rich.*

So you note his colours, Julie ?

Shame on you, child ; look loftier. By the mass,

I have business with this modest gentleman.

Julie. You're angry with poor Julie. There's no cause.*Rich.* No cause—you hate my foes ?*Julie.*

I do !

Rich.

Hate Mauprat ?

Julie. Not Mauprat. No, not Adrien, father.

Rich.

Adrien !

Familiar !—Go, child ; no, not *that* way ; wait
In the tapestry chamber ; I will join you,—go.

Julie. His brows are knit ; I dare not call him father !
But I *must* speak—Your Eminence——

Rich. [*sternly*].

Well, girl !

Julie.

Nay,

Smile on me—one smile more ; there, now I'm happy.
Do not rank Mauprat with your foes ; he is not,
I know he *is* not ; he loves France too well.

Rich. Not rank De Mauprat with my foes ? So be it.
I'll blot him from that list.

Julie.

That's my own father.

[*Exit JULIE.*

Rich. [*ringing a small bell on the table*].

Huguet !

Enter HUGUET.

De Mauprat struggled not, nor murmured ?

Hug. No ; proud and passive.

Rich.

Bid him enter.—Hold :

Look that he hide no weapon. Humph, despair
Makes victims sometimes victors. When he has enter'd
Glide round unseen ;—place thyself yonder [*pointing to*
the screen] ; watch him ;

If he show violence—(let me see thy carbine ;
So, a good weapon ;)—if he play the lion,
Why—the dog's death.

Hug.

I never miss my mark.

[*Exit HUGUET ; RICHELIEU seats himself at the table, and slowly arranges the papers before him. Enter DE MAUPRAT, preceded by HUGUET, who then retires behind the screen.*

Rich. Approach, sir.—Can you call to mind the hour,
Now three years since, when in this room, methinks,
Your presence honour'd me ?

De Mau.

It is, my Lord,

One of my most——

Rich. [*drily*]. Delightful recollections. *

De Mau. [*aside*]. St. Denis ! doth he make a jest of
axe

And headsman ?

Rich. [*sternly*]. I did then accord you
A mercy ill requited—you still live ?

De Mau. To meet death face to face at last.

[*Rich.* Your words
Are bold.

De Mau. My deeds have not belied them.

Rich. Deeds !

O miserable delusion of man's pride !
Deeds ! cities sack'd, fields ravaged, hearths profaned,
Men butcher'd ! In your hour of doom behold
The *deeds* you boast of ! From rank showers of blood,
And the red light of blazing roofs, you build
The rainbow glory, and to shuddering conscience
Cry,—Lo, the bridge to Heaven !

De Mau.

If war be sinful,

Your hand the gauntlet cast.

Rich.

It was so, sir.

Note the distinction :—I weigh'd well the cause

* There are many anecdotes of the irony, often so terrible, in which Richelieu indulged. But he had a love for humour in its more hearty and genial shape. He would send for Boisrobert "to make him laugh,"—and grave ministers and magnates waited in the ante-room, while the great cardinal listened and responded to the sallies of the lively wit

Which made the standard holy ; raised the war
But to secure the peace. France bled—I groan'd ;
But look'd beyond ; and, in the vista, saw
France saved, and I exulted. You—but you
Were but the tool of slaughter—knowing nought,
Foreseeing nought, nought hoping, nought lamenting,
And for nought fit—save cutting throats for hire.
Deeds, marry, deeds !

De Mau. If you would deign to speak
Thus to your armies ere they march to battle,
Perchance your Eminence might have the pain
Of the throat-cutting to yourself.

Rich. [*aside*]. He has wit,
This Mauprat—[*Aloud*.] Let it pass ; there is against you
What you can less excuse.] Messire de Mauprat,
Doom'd to sure death, how hast thou since consumed
The time allotted thee for serious thought
And solemn penitence ?

De Mau. [*embarrassed*]. The time, my lord ?

Rich. Is not the question plain ? I'll answer for thee.
Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine ; no sackcloth
chafed

Thy delicate flesh. The rosary and the death's-head
Have not, with pious meditation, purged
Earth from the carnal gaze. . What thou hast *not* done
Brief told ; what done, a volume ! Wild debauch,
Turbulent riot ;—for the morn the dice-box—
Noon claim'd the duel—and the night the wassail ;
These, your most holy, pure preparatives,
For death and judgment. Do I wrong you, sir ?

De Mau. I was not always thus :—if changed my nature,
Blame that which changed my fate.—Alas, my lord,

[There is a brotherhood which calm-eyed reason
 Can wot not of betwixt despair and mirth.
 My birth-place mid the vines of sunny Provence,
 Perchance the stream that sparkles in my veins
 Came from that wine of passionate life which, erst,
 Glow'd in the wild heart of the troubadour :
 And danger, which makes steadier courage wary,
 But fevers me with an insane delight ;
 As one of old who on the mountain 'crags
 Caught madness from a Mænad's haunting eyes.
 Were you, my lord,—whose path imperial power,
 And the grave cares of reverent wisdom, guard
 From all that tempts to folly meaner men,—]
 Were you accursed with that which you inflicted—
 By bed and board, dogg'd by one ghastly spectre—
 The while within you youth beat high, and life
 Grew lovelier from the neighbouring frown of death—
 The heart no bud, nor fruit—save in those seeds
 Most worthless, which spring up, bloom, bear, and wither
 In the same hour—Were this your fate, perchance,
 You would have err'd like me !

Rich. I might, like you,
 Have been a brawler and a reveller ;—not,
 Like you, a trickster and a thief.—

De Mau. [*advancing threateningly*]. Lord Cardinal !
 Unsay those words !—

[HUGUET *deliberately raises the carbine.*

Rich. [*waving his hand*]. Not quite so quick, friend

Huguet ;

Messire de Mauprat is a patient man,
 And he can wait !—

You have outrun your fortune ;—

I blame you not, that you would be a beggar—
Each to his taste !—But I do charge you, sir,
That, being beggar'd, you would coin false moneys
Out of that crucible, called DEBT.—To live
On means not yours—be brave in silks and laces,
Gallant in steeds—splendid in banquets ;—all
Not *yours*—ungiven—uninherited—unpaid for ;—
This is to be a trickster ; and to filch
Men's art and labour, which to them is wealth,
Life, daily bread,—quitting all scores with—“ Friend,
You're troublesome ! ”—Why this, forgive me,
Is what—when done with a less dainty grace—
Plain folks call “ *Theft* ! ” You owe eight thousand pistoles,
Minus one crown, two liards !——

De Mau. [*aside*].

The old conjuror !

Sdeath, he'll inform me next how many cups
I drank at dinner !

Rich.

This is scandalous,

Shaming your birth and blood. I tell you, sir,
That you must pay your debts.

De Mau.

With all my heart,

My lord. Where shall I borrow, then, the money ?

Rich. [*aside and laughing*]. A humorous dare-devil !—

The very man

To suit my purpose—ready, frank, and bold !

[*Rising and earnestly.*

Adrien de Mauprat, men have called me cruel ;—
I am not ;—I am *just* !—I found France rent asunder,—
The rich men despots, and the poor banditti ;—
Sloth in the mart, and schism within the temple ;
Brawls festering to rebellion ; and weak laws
Rotting away with rust in antique sheaths.

I have re-created France ; and, from the ashes
 Of the old feudal and decrepit carcase,
 Civilization on her luminous wings
 Soars, phoenix-like, to Jove ! What was my art ?
 Genius, some say,—some, fortune,—witchcraft, some.
 Not so ;—my art was JUSTICE !—Force and fraud
 Misname it cruelty—you shall confute them !
 My champion you ? You met me as your foe,
 Depart my friend—You shall not die.—France needs you.
 You shall wipe off all stains,—be rich, be honour'd,
 Be great.—

[DE MAUPRAT falls on his knee—RICHELIEU raises him.]

I ask, sir, in return, this hand,
 To gift it with a bride, whose dower shall match,
 Yet not exceed, her beauty.

De Mau.

I, my lord,—[hesitating]

I have no wish to marry.

Rich.

Surely, sir,

To die were worse.

De Mau.

Scarcely ; the poorest coward
 Must die,—but knowingly to march to marriage—
 My lord, it asks the courage of a lion !

Rich. Traitor, thou triflest with me ! I know all !
 Thou hast dared to love my ward—my charge.

De Mau.

As rivers

May love the sunlight—basking in the beams,
 And hurrying on !—

Rich.

Thou hast told her of thy love ?

De Mau. My lord, if I had dared to love a maid,
 Lowliest in France, I would not so have wronged her,
 As bid her link rich life and virgin hope

With one, the deathman's gripe might, from her side,
Pluck at the nuptial altar.

Rich. I believe thee ;

Yet since she knows not of thy love, renounce her ;
Take life and fortune with another !—Silent ?

De Mau. Your fate has been one triumph—you know not
How bless'd a thing it was in my dark hour
To nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish.
Love hath no need of words ;—nor less within
That holiest temple—the Heaven-builed soul—
Breathes the recorded vow. Base knight,—false lover
Were he, who barter'd all, that brighten'd grief,
Or sanctified despair, for life and gold.
Revoke your mercy ;—I prefer the fate
I look'd for !

Rich. Huguet ! to the tapestry chamber
Conduct your prisoner. [*To MAUPRAT.*]

You will there behold
The executioner :—your doom be private—
And Heaven have mercy on you !

De Mau. When I am dead,
Tell her, I loved her.

Rich. Keep such follies, sir,
For fitter ears ;—go—

De Mau. Does he mock me ?

[*Exeunt DE MAUPRAT, HUGUET.*]

Rich. Joseph,
Come forth.

Enter JOSEPH.

Methinks your cheek hath lost its rubies ;
I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh ;
The scourge is heavy.

Joseph. Pray you, change the subject.

Rich. You good men are so modest !—Well, to business !
Go instantly—deeds—notaries !—bid my stewards
Arrange my house by the Luxembourg—*my* house
No more !—a bridal present to my ward,
Who weds to-morrow.

Joseph. Weds, with whom ?

Rich. De Mauprat.

Joseph. Penniless husband !

Rich. Bah ! the mate for beauty
Should be a man, and not a money-chest !
When her brave sire lay on his bed of death,
I vow'd to be a father to his Julie :—
And so he died—the smile upon his lips !—
And when I spared the life of her young lover,
Methought I saw that smile again !—Who else,
Look you, in all the court—who else so well,
Brave, or supplant the favourite ;—balk the king—
Baffle their schemes ?—I have tried him :—He has honour
And courage ;—qualities that eagle-plume
Men's souls,—and fit them for the fiercest sun,
Which ever melted the weak waxen minds
That flutter in the beams of gaudy Power !
Besides, he has taste, this Mauprat :—When my play
Was acted to dull tiers of lifeless gapers,*

* The Abbé Arnaud tells us that the queen was a little avenged on the cardinal by the ill success of the tragi-comedy of “ *Mirame* ”—more than suspected to be his own—though presented to the world under the foster-name of Desmarets. Its representation (says Pelisson) cost him 300,000 crowns. He was so transported out of himself by the performance, that at one time he thrust his person half out of his box to show himself to the assembly ; at another time he imposed silence on the audience, that they might not lose “ *des*

Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him
 Applaud in the proper places :—trust me, Joseph,
 He is a man of an uncommon promise !

Joseph. And yet your foe.

Rich.

Have I not foes enow ?—

Great men gain doubly when they make foes friends.
 Remember my grand maxims :—First employ
 All methods to conciliate.*

Joseph.

Failing these ?

Rich. [*fiercely*]. All means to crush : as with the
 opening, and

The clenching of this little hand, I will
 Crush the small venom of these stinging courtiers.
 So, so, we've baffled Baradas.

Joseph.

And when

Check the conspiracy ?

Rich.

Check, check ? Full way to it.

Let it bud, ripen, flaunt i' the day, and burst
 To fruit,—the Dead Sea's fruit of ashes ; ashes

endroits encore plus beaux !” He said afterwards to Desmarets :—
 “Eh bien, les Français n'auront donc jamais de goût. Ils n'ont pas
 été charmés de Mirame !” Arnaud says pithily,—“On ne pouvoit
 alors avoir d'autre satisfaction des offenses d'un homme qui étoit
 maître de tout, et redoutable à tout le monde.” Nevertheless, his
 style in prose, though not devoid of the pedantic affectations of the
 time, often rises into very noble eloquence.

* “Vialart remarque une chose qui peut expliquer la conduite
 de Richelieu en d'autres circonstances :—c'est que les seigneurs à
 qui leur naissance ou leur mérite pouvoit permettre des prétensions,
 il avoit pour système, de leur accorder au-delà même de leurs droits
 et de leurs espérances, mais, aussi, une fois comblés—si, au lieu de
 reconnoître ses services ils se levoient contre lui, et ils traitoit sans
 miséricorde.”—*Anquetil.* See also the Political Testament, and the
 Mémoires de Cardinal Richelieu, in Petitot's collection.

Which I will scatter to the winds.

Go, Joseph ;

When you return, I have a feast for you ;
The last great act of my great play : the verses,
Methinks, are fine,—ah, very fine.—*You* write
Verses ! *—[*aside*] *such* verses !—You have wit, discern-
ment.

Joseph [*aside*]. Worse than the scourge ! Strange that
so great a statesman

Should be so bad a poet.

Rich.

What dost thou say ?

Joseph. That it is strange so great a statesman
should

Be so sublime a poet.

Rich.

Ah, you rogue ;

Laws die, Books never. Of my ministry
I am not vain ! but of my muse, I own it.

Come, you shall hear the verses now. [*Takes up a MS.*

Joseph.

My lord,

The deeds, the notaries !

Rich.

True, I pity you ;

But business first, then pleasure. [*Exit JOSEPH.*

Rich. [*seats himself and reading*]. Ah, sublime !

* “Tantôt fanatique—tantôt fourbe—fonder les religieuses de Calvaire—*faire des vers*.” Thus speaks Voltaire of Father Joseph. His talents and influence with Richelieu, grossly exaggerated in his own day, are now rightly estimated.

“C’étoit en effet un homme infatigable—portant dans les entreprises, l’activité, la souplesse, l’opiniâtreté propre à les faire réussir.” —*Anquetil*. He wrote a Latin poem, called “La Turciade,” in which he sought to excite the kingdoms of Christendom against the Turks. But the inspiration of Tyrtæus was denied to Father Joseph.

Enter DE MAUPRAT and JULIE.

De Mau. Oh, speak, my lord—I dare not think you mock me.

And yet—

Rich. Hush—hush—This line must be consider'd !

Julie. Are we not both your children ?

Rich. What a couplet !——

How now ! Oh, sir—you live !

De Mau. Why, no, methinks,
Elysium is not life !

Julie. He smiles !—you smile,
My father ! From my heart for ever, now,
I'll blot the name of orphan !

Rich. Rise, my children,
For ye are mine—mine both ;—and in your sweet
And young delight—your love (life's first-born glory)—
My own lost youth breathes musical !

De Mau. I'll seek
Temple and priest henceforward, were it but
To learn Heaven's choicest blessings.

Rich. Thou shalt seek
Temple and priest right soon ; the morrow's sun
Shall see across these barren thresholds pass
The fairest bride in Paris.—Go, my children,
Even *I* loved once !—Be lovers while ye may !
How is it with you, sir ! You bear it bravely :
You know, it asks the courage of a lion.

[*Exeunt JULIE and DE MAUPRAT.*

Rich. Oh godlike Power ! Woe, Rapture, Penury,
Wealth,—
Marriage and Death, for one infirm old man
Through a great empire to dispense—withhold—

As the will whispers ! And shall things—like motes
That live in my daylight—lackeys of court wages,
Dwarf'd starvelings—manikins, upon whose shoulders
The burthen of a province were a load
More heavy than the globe on Atlas,—cast
Lots for my robes and sceptre ? France ! I love thee !
All Earth shall never pluck thee from my heart !
My mistress France—my wedded wife,—sweet France,
Who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me !
[*Exit* RICHELIEU.]

ACT II.

SECOND DAY.

SCENE I.—*A splendid apartment in MAUPRAT'S new House. Casements opening to the Gardens, beyond which the domes of the Luxembourg Palace.*

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. Mauprat's new home :—too splendid for a soldier !
But o'er his floors—the while I stalk—methinks
My shadow spreads gigantic to the gloom
The old rude towers of the Bastile cast far
Along the smoothness of the jocund day.—
Well, thou hast 'scaped the fierce caprice of Richelieu ;
But art thou farther from the headsman, fool ?
Thy secret I have whisper'd to the king ;
Thy marriage makes the king thy foe.—Thou stand'st
On the abyss—and in the pool below
I see a ghastly, headless phantom mirror'd ;—

Thy likeness ere the marriage moon hath waned.
Meanwhile—meanwhile—ha—ha, if thou art wedded,
Thou art not wived.

Enter MAUPRAT [splendidly dressed].

De Mau. Was ever fate like mine ?
So blest and yet so wretched !

Bar. Joy, De Mauprat !—
Why, what a brow, man, for your wedding-day !

De Mau. Jest not !—Distraction !

Bar. What, your wife a shrew
Already ? Courage, man—the common lot !

De Mau. Oh ! that she were less lovely, or less loved !

Bar. Riddles again !

De Mau. You know what chanced between
The cardinal and myself.

Bar. This morning brought
Your letter :—faith, a strange account ! I laugh'd
And wept at once for gladness.

De Mau. We were wed
At noon ;—the rite perform'd, came hither !—scarce
Arrived, when——

Bar. Well ?—

De Mau. Wide flew the doors, and lo,
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle !

Bar. 'Tis the king's hand !—the royal seal !

De Mau. Read—read—

Bar. [reading]. "Whereas Adrien de Mauprat, Colonel
and Chevalier in our armies, being already guilty of High
Treason, by the seizure of our town of Faviaux, has pre-
sumed, without our knowledge, consent, or sanction, to con-
nect himself by marriage with Julie de Mortemar, a

wealthy orphan, attached to the person of Her Majesty, without our knowledge or consent—We do hereby proclaim and declare the said marriage contrary to law. On penalty of death, Adrien de Mauprat will not communicate with the said Julie de Mortemar by word or letter, save in the presence of our faithful servant, the Sieur de Beringhen, and then with such respect and decorum as are due to a demoiselle attached to the Court of France, until such time as it may suit our royal pleasure to confer with the Holy Church on the formal annulment of the marriage, and with our Council on the punishment to be awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who is cautioned, for his own sake, to preserve silence as to our injunction, more especially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar.

“ Given under our hand and seal at the Louvre.

“ LOUIS.”

Bar. [*returning the letter*]. Amazement !—Did not Richelieu say, the king

Knew not your crime ?

De Mau.

He said so.

Bar.

Poor De Mauprat !—

See you the snare, the vengeance worse than death,

Of which you are the victim ?

De Mau.

Ha !

Bar. [*aside*].

It works !

[*JULIE and DE BERINGHEN in the Gardens.*

You have not sought the cardinal yet to——

De Mau.

No !

Scarce yet my sense awaken'd from the shock ;

Now I will seek him.

Bar.

Hold, beware !—Stir not

Till we confer again.

De Mau.

Speak—out, man !

Bar.

Hush !

Your wife !—De Beringhen !—Be on your guard—

Obey the royal orders to the letter.

I'll look around your palace. By my troth

A princely mansion !

De Mau.

Stay—

Bar.

So new a bridegroom

Can want no visitors ;—Your servant, madam !

Oh ! happy pair—Oh ! charming picture !

*[Exit through a side-door.]**Julie.*

Adrien,

You left us suddenly—Are you not well ?

De Mau. Oh, very well—that is—extremely ill !*Julie.* Ill, Adrien ?*[Taking his hand.]**De Mau.*

Not when I see thee.

*[He is about to lift her hand to his lips when DE BERINGHEN coughs and pulls his mantle. MAUPRAT drops the hand and walks away.]**Julie.*

Alas !

Should he not love me ?

De Ber. *[aside.]* Have a care ; I must

Report each word—each gesture to his Majesty.

De Mau. Sir, if you were not in his Majesty's service,

You'd be the most officious, impudent,

Damn'd busy-body ever interfering

In a man's family affairs.

De Ber.

But as

I do belong, sir, to his Majesty—

De Mau. You're lucky !—Still, were we a story
higher,

'Twere prudent not to go too near the window.

Julie. Adrien, what have I done? Say, am I changed

Since yesterday?—or was it but for wealth,
Ambition, life—that—that—you swore you loved me?

De Mau. I shall go mad!—I do, indeed I do—

De Ber. [*aside.*] Not love her! that were highly disrespectful.

Julie. You do—what, Adrien?

De Mau. Oh! I do, indeed——

I do think, that this weather is delightful!

A charming day! the sky is so serene!

And what a prospect!—[*to DE BERINGHEN*] Oh! you popinjay!

Julie. He jests at me!—he mocks me!—yet I love him,

And every look becomes the lips we love!

Perhaps I am too grave?—You laugh at Julie;

If laughter please you, welcome be the music!

Only say, Adrien, that you love me.

De Mau. [*kissing her hand.*] Ay;

With my whole heart I love you!——

Now, sir, go,

And tell that to his Majesty!—Who ever

Heard of its being a state offence to kiss

The hand of one's own wife?

Julie. He says he loves me,

And starts away, as if to say “I love you”

Meant something *very* dreadful.—Come, sit by me,—

I place your chair!—fie on your gallantry!

[*They sit down; as he pushes his chair back, she draws hers nearer.*]

Why must this strange Messire de Beringhen

Be always here? He never takes a hint.

Do you not wish him gone?

De Mau.

Upon my soul

I do, my Julie!—Send him for your *bouquet*,

Your glove, your—anything.

Julie.

Messire de Beringhen,

I dropp'd my glove in the gardens by the fountain,

Or the alcove, or—stay—no, by the statue

Of Cupid; may I ask you to—

De Ber.

To send for it?

Certainly [*ringing a bell on the table.*] André, Pierre,

(your rascals, how

Do ye call them?)

Enter Servants.

Ah—*Madame* has dropp'd her glove

In the gardens, by the fountain,—or the alcove;

Or—stay—no, by the statue—eh?—of Cupid.

Bring it.

De Mau. Did ever now one pair of shoulders

Carry such waggon-loads of impudence

Into a gentleman's drawing-room?

Dear Julie,

I'm busy—letters—visitors—the devil!

I do beseech you leave me—I say—leave me.

Julie [*weeping.*] You are unkind.

[*Exit.*

[*As she goes out, MAUPRAY drops on one knee and kisses the hem of her mantle, unseen by her.*

De Ber.

Ten millions of apologies——

De Mau. I'll not take one of them. I have, as yet,

Withstood all things—my heart—my love—my rights.

But Julie's tears!——When is this farce to end?

De Ber. Oh ! when you please. His Majesty requests me,

As soon as you infringe his gracious orders,
To introduce you to the Governor
Of the Bastile. I should have had that honour
Before, but, gad, my foible is good-nature ;
One can't be hard upon a friend's infirmities.

De Mau. I know the king can send me to the scaffold—
Dark prospect !—but I'm used to it ; and if
The Church and Council, by this hour to-morrow,
One way or other settle not the matter,
I will——

De Ber. What, my dear sir ?

De Mau. Show you the door
My dear, dear sir ; talk as I please, with whom
I please, in my own house, dear sir, until
His Majesty shall condescend to find
A stouter gentleman than you, dear sir,
To take me out ; and now you understand me,
My dear, most dear—oh damnably dear sir !

De Ber. What, almost in a passion ! you will cool
Upon reflection. Well, since *Madame's* absent,
I'll take a small refreshment. Now, don't stir ;
Be careful ;—how's your burgundy ?—I'll taste it—
Finish it all before I leave you. Nay,
No form ;—you see I make myself at home.

Exit DE BERINGHEN.

De Mau. [going to the door through which BARADAS had
passed.] Baradas ! Count !

Enter BARADAS.

You spoke of snares—of vengeance
Sharper than death—be plainer.

Bar.

What so clear ?

Richelieu has but two passions—

De Mau.

Richelieu !

Bar.

Yes !

Ambition and revenge—in you both blended.

First for ambition—Julie is his ward,

Innocent—docile—pliant to his will—

He placed her at the court—foresaw the rest—

The king loves Julie !

De Mau.

Merciful Heaven ! The king !

Bar. Such Cupids lend new plumes to Richelieu's
wings :

But the court etiquette must give such Cupids

The veil of Hymen—(Hymen but in name.)

He look'd abroad—found you his foe :—*thus* served

Ambition—by the grandeur of his ward,

And vengeance—by dishonour to his foe !

De Mau. Prove this.*Bar.*

You have the proof—the royal Letter :—

Your strange exemption from the general pardon,

Known but to me and Richelieu ; can you doubt

Your friend to acquit your foe ? The truth is
glaring—

Richelieu alone could tell the princely lover

The tale which sells your life,—or buys your honour !

De Mau. I see it all ? Mock pardon—hurried nup-
tials—

False bounty !—all !—the serpent of that smile !

Oh ! it stings home !

Bar.

You yet shall crush his malice ;

Our plans are sure :—Orleans is at our head ;

We meet to-night ; join us, and with us triumph.

De Mau. To-night ? — Oh, Heaven ! — my marriage night ! — Revenge !

Bar. [What class of men, whose white lips do not curse
The grim, insatiate, universal tyrant ?

We, noble-born—where are our antique rights—

Our feudal seigniories—our castled strength,

That did divide us from the base Plebeians,

And made our swords our law—where are they ? Trod

To dust—and o'er the graves of our dead power

Scaffolds are monuments—the kingly house

Shorn of its beams—the Royal Sun of France

'Clipsed by this blood-red comet. Where we turn,

Nothing but Richelieu !—armies—church—state—laws,

But mirrors that do multiply his beams.

He sees all—acts all—Argus and Briaræus—

Spy at our boards—and deathsman at our hearths ;

Under the venom of one laidley nightshade,

Wither the lilies of all France.

De Mau. [*impatiently*]. But Julie—

Bar. [*unheeding him*]. As yet the Fiend that serves
hath saved his power

From every snare ; and in the epitaphs

Of many victims dwells a warning moral

That preaches caution. Were I not assured

That what before was hope is ripen'd now

Into most certain safety, trust me, Mauprat,

I still could hush my hate and mark thy wrongs,

And say “ Be patient ! ” Now, the King himself

Smiles kindly when I tell him that his peers

Will rid him of his Priest. You knit your brows,

Noble impatience !—Pass we to our scheme !]

'Tis Richelieu's wont, each morn, within his chapel

(Hypocrite worship ended), to dispense
Alms to the Mendicant-friars,—in that guise
A band (yourself the leader) shall surround
And seize the despot.

De Mau. But the king?—but Julie?

Bar. The king, infirm in health, in mind more feeble,
Is but the plaything of a minister's will.
Were Richelieu dead—his power were mine; and Louis
Soon should forget his passion and your crime.
But whither now?

De Mau. I know not; I scarce hear thee;
A little while for thought: anon I'll join thee;
But now, all air seems tainted, and I loathe
The face of man!

[*Exit DE MAUPRAT through the Gardens.*]

Bar. Start from the chase, my prey,
But as thou speed'st the hell-hounds of revenge
Pant in thy track and dog thee down.

*Enter DE BERINGHEN, his mouth full, a napkin in
his hand.*

De Ber. Chevalier,
Your cook's a miracle,—what, my host gone?
Faith, count, my office is a post of danger—
A fiery fellow, Mauprat! touch and go,—
Match and saltpetre,—pr—r—r—r—!

Bar. You
Will be released ere long. The king resolves
To call the bride to court this day.

De Ber. Poor Mauprat!
Yet, since *you* love the lady, why so careless
Of the king's suit?

Bar. Because the lady's virtuous,

And the king timid. Ere he win the suit,
He'll lose the crown,—the bride will be a widow,—
And I—the Richelieu of the Regent Orleans.

De Ber. Is Louis still so chafed against the Fox
For snatching yon fair dainty from the Lion ?

Bar. So chafed, that Richelieu totters. Yes, the king
Is half conspirator against the cardinal.
Enough of this. I've found the man we wanted,—
The man to head the hands that murder Richelieu,—
The man, whose name the synonym for daring.

De Ber. He must mean me ! No, count ; I am, I own,
A valiant dog—but still——

Bar. Whom can I mean
But Mauprat ?—Mark, to-night we meet at Marion's.
There shall we sign ; thence send this scroll [*showing it*]
to Bouillon.

You're in that secret [*affectionately*—one of our new
Council.

De Ber. But to admit the Spaniard—France's foe—
Into the heart of France—dethrone the king—
It looks like treason, and I smell the headsman.

Bar. Oh, sir, too late to falter : when we meet
We must arrange the separate, coarser scheme,
For Richelieu's death. Of this despatch De Mauprat
Must nothing learn. He only bites at vengeance,
And he would start from treason.—We must post him
Without the door at Marion's—as a sentry.

[*Aside*].—So, when his head is on the block—his tongue
Cannot betray our more august designs !

De Ber. I'll meet you if the king can spare me.—

[*Aside.*] No !

I am too old a goose to play with foxes,

I'll roost at home. Meanwhile, in the next room
There's a delicious pâté,—let's discuss it.

Bar. Pshaw ! a man fill'd with a sublime ambition
Has no time to discuss your pâtés.

De Ber.

Pshaw !

And a man fill'd with as sublime a pâté
Has no time to discuss ambition.—Gad,
I have the best of it !

Enter JULIE hastily with first Courtier.

Julie [to Courtier]. A summons, sir,
To attend the Louvre ?—On *this* day, too ?

Cour.

Madame,

The royal carriage waits below.—Messire [to DE BERINGHEN]

You will return with us.

Julie.

What can this mean ?—

Where is my husband ?

Bar.

He has left the house,

Perhaps till nightfall—so he bade me tell you.

Alas, were I the lord of such fair treasure—

Julie [impatiently]. Till nightfall ? — Strange — my
heart misgives me !

Cour.

Madam,

My orders will not broke delay.

Julie [to BARADAS].

You'll see him—

And you will tell him !

Bar.

From the flowers of Hybla

Never more gladly did the bee bear honey,

Than I take sweetness from those rosiest lips,

Though to the hive of others !

Cour. [to DE BERINGHEN]. Come, Messire.

De Ber. [*hesitating*]. One moment, just to—

Cour. Come, sir.

De Ber. I shall not

Discuss the pâté after all. 'Ecod,

I'm puzzled now. I don't know who's the best of it !

[*Exeunt JULIE, DE BERINGHEN, and Courtier.*]

Bar. Now will this fire his fever into madness !

All is made clear : Mauprat *must* murder Richelieu—

Die for that crime :—I shall console his Julie—

This will reach Bouillon !—from the wrecks of France

I shall carve out—who knows—perchance a throne !

All in despite of my Lord Cardinal.—

Enter DE MAUPRAT from the Gardens.

De Mau. Speak ! can it be ?—Methought, that from
the terrace

I saw the carriage of the king—and Julie !

No !—no !—my frenzy peoples the void air

With its own phantoms !

Bar. Nay, too true.—Alas !

Was ever lightning swifter, or more blasting,

Than Richelieu's forkèd guile ?

De Mau. I'll to the Louvre——

Bar. And lose all hope !—The Louvre !—the sure
gate

To the Bastile !

De Mau. The king——

Bar. Is but the wax,

Which Richelieu stamps ! Break the malignant seal,

And I will rase the print. Come, man, take heart !

Her virtue well could brave a sterner trial

Than a few hours of cold imperious courtship.

Were Richelieu *dust*—no danger !

De Mau.

 Ghastly Vengeance !

To thee, and thine august and solemn sister,
The unrelenting Death, I dedicate
The blood of Armand Richelieu ! When Dishonour
Reaches our hearths Law dies and Murther takes
The angel shape of Justice !

Bar.

 Bravely said !

At midnight,—Marion's !—Nay, I cannot leave thee
To thoughts that——

De Mau.

 Speak not to me !—I am yours !—

But speak not ! There's a voice within my soul,
Whose cry could drown the thunder.—Oh ! if men
Will play dark sorcery with the heart of man,
Let them, who raise the spell, beware the Fiend ! [*Exeunt.*]



SCENE II.

A room in the Palais Cardinal (as in the First Act).

RICHELIEU and JOSEPH.

FRANÇOIS *writing at a table.*

Joseph. Yes ;—Huguet, taking his accustom'd round,—
Disguised as some plain burgher,—heard these rufflers
Quoting your name :—he listen'd,—“ Pshaw,” said one,
“ We are to seize the Cardinal in his palace
To-morrow ! ”—“ How ? ” the other ask'd :—“ You'll hear
The whole design to-night : the Duke of Orleans
And Baradas have got the map of action

At their fingers' end."—"So be it," quoth the other,
 "I will be there,—Marion de Lorme's—at midnight!"

Rich. I have them, man,—I have them!

Joseph.

So they say

Of you, my lord ;—believe me, that their plans
 Are mightier than you deem. You must employ
 Means no less vast to meet them!

Rich.

Bah! in policy

We foil gigantic danger, not by giants,
 But dwarfs.—The statues of our stately fortune
 Are sculptured by the chisel—not the axe! *
 Ah! were I younger—by the knightly heart
 That beats beneath these priestly robes,† I would
 Have pastime with these cut-throats!—Yea,—as when

* Richelieu not only employed the lowest, but would often consult men commonly esteemed the dullest. "Il disait que dans des choses de très grande importance, il avait expérimenté, que les moins sages donnaient souvent les meilleurs expédiens."—*Le Clerc*

† Both Richelieu and Joseph were originally intended for the profession of arms. Joseph had served before he obeyed the spiritual inspiration to become a Capuchin. The death of his brother opened to Richelieu the bishopric of Luçon; but his military propensities were as strong as his priestly ambition. I need scarcely add that the cardinal, during his brilliant campaign in Italy, marched at the head of his troops in complete armour. It was under his administration that occurs the last example of proclaiming war by the chivalric defiance of herald and cartel. Richelieu valued himself much on his personal activity,—for his vanity was as universal as his ambition. A nobleman of the house of Grammont one day found him employed in *jumping*, and with all the *savoir vivre* of a Frenchman and a courtier, offered to jump against him. He suffered the cardinal to jump higher, and soon after found himself rewarded by an appointment. Yet, strangely enough, this vanity did not lead to a patronage injurious to the state; for never before in France was ability made so essential a requisite in promotion. He was lucky in finding the cleverest fellow among his adroitest flatterers.

Lured to the ambush of the expecting foe,—
I clove my pathway through the plumed sea !
Reach me yon falchion, François,—not that bauble
For carpet-warriors,—yonder—such a blade
As old Charles Martel might have wielded when
He drove the Saracen from France.

[FRANÇOIS brings him one of the long two-handed swords
worn in the middle ages.

With this

I, at Rochelle, did hand to hand engage
The stalwart Englisher,—no mongrels, boy,
Those island mastiffs,—mark the notch—a deep one—
His casque made here,—I shore him to the waist !
A toy—a feather—then ! [*Tries to wield, and lets it fall.*
You see, a child could

Slay Richelieu now.

Fran. [*his hand on his hilt*]. But now, at your command
Are other weapons, my good lord.

Rich. [*who has seated himself as to write, lifts the pen.*]

True,—THIS !

Beneath the rule of men entirely great
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
The arch-enchanter's wand !—itself a nothing !—
But taking sorcery from the master-hand
To paralyse the Cæsars—and to strike
The loud earth breathless !—Take away the sword—
States can be saved without it ! [*Looking on the clock.*
'Tis the hour,—

Retire, sir.

[*Exit FRANÇOIS.*

[*A knock is heard. A door concealed in the arras opens
cautiously. Enter MARION DE LORME.*

Joseph [*amazed*]. Marion de Lorme !

Rich. Hist ! Joseph !
Keep guard.

[JOSEPH retires to the principal entrance.

My faithful Marion !

Marion. Good, my Lord,
They meet to-night in my poor house. The Duke
Of Orleans heads them.

Rich. Yes, go on.

Marion. His Highness,
Much question'd if I knew some brave, discreet,
And vigilant man, whose tongue could keep a secret,
And who had those twin qualities for service,
The love of gold, the hate of Richelieu.—

Rich. You ?—

Marion. Made answer, “Yes—my brother ;—bold and
trusty ;
Whose faith, my faith could pledge ;”—the Duke then
bade me
Have him equipp'd and arm'd—well mounted—ready
This night to part for Italy.

Rich. Aha !—

Has Bouillon too turn'd traitor ?—So, methought !—
What part of Italy ?

Marion. The Piedmont frontier,
Where Bouillon lies encamp'd.

Rich. Now there is danger !
Great danger !—If he tamper with the Spaniard,
And Louis list not to my counsel, as,
Without sure proof, he will not,—France is lost.
What more ?

Marion. Dark hints of some design to seize
Your person in your palace. Nothing clear—

His Highness trembled while he spoke—the words
Did choke each other.

Rich. So !—Who is the brother
You recommended to the Duke ?

Marion. Whoever
Your Eminence may father !—

Rich. Darling Marion ! *

[*Goes to the table, and returns with a large bag of gold.*]

There—pshaw—a trifle !—What an eye you have !
And what a smile—child !—[*kisses her.*]—Ah ! you fair
perdition—

'Tis well I'm old !

Marion [*aside and seriously*]. What a great man he is !

Rich. You are sure they meet ?—the hour ?

Marion. At midnight.

Rich. And

You will engage to give the Duke's Despatch
To whom I send ?

Marion. Ay, marry !

Rich. [*aside*]. Huguet ? No ;

* Voltaire openly charges Richelieu with being the lover of Marion de Lorme ; and the great poet of France, Victor Hugo, has sacrificed History to adorn her with qualities which were certainly not added to her personal charms. She was not less perfidious than beautiful. Le Clerc, properly, refutes the accusation of Voltaire against the discretion of Richelieu, and says, very justly, that if the great minister had the frailties of human nature, he learnt how to veil them,—at least when he obtained the scarlet. In earlier life he had been prone to gallantries which a little prepossessed the king (who was formal and decorous, and threw a singular coldness into the few attachments he permitted to himself), against the aspiring intriguer. But these gayer occupations died away in the engagement of higher pursuits or of darker passions.

He will be wanted elsewhere.—Joseph ?—zealous,
 But too well known—too much the *elder* brother !
 Mauprat ?—alas ! it is his wedding-day !—
 François ?—the Man of Men !—unnoted—young—
 Ambitious—[*Goes to the door.*]—François !

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Rich. Follow this fair lady ;
 (Find him the suiting garments, Marion,) take
 My fleetest steed :—arm thyself to the teeth ;
 A packet will be given you—with orders,
 No matter what !—The instant that your hand
 Closes upon it—clutch *it*, like your honour,
 Which Death alone can steal, or ravish—set
 Spurs to your steed—be breathless, till you stand
 Again before me.—Stay, sir !—You will find me
 Two short leagues hence—at Ruelle, in my castle.
 Young man, be blithe !—for—note me—from the hour
 I grasp that packet—think your guardian Star
 Rains fortune on you !—

Fran.

If I fail—

Rich.

Fail—fail !

In the lexicon of youth, which Fate reserves
 For a bright manhood, there is no such word
 As—*fail* !—(You will instruct him further, Marion)
 Follow her—but at distance ;—speak not to her,
 Till you are housed.—Farewell, boy ! Never say
 “ *Fail* ” again.

Fran. I will not !

Rich. [*patting his locks*]. There's my young hero !—

[*Exeunt* FRANÇOIS, MARION.]

Rich. So, they would seize my person in this palace ?—

I cannot guess their scheme ;—but my retinue
Is here too large !—a single traitor could
Strike impotent the faith of thousands ;—Joseph,
Art sure of Huguet ?—Think—we hang'd his Father !

Joseph. But you have bought the Son ;—heap'd favours
on him !

Rich. Trash !—favours past—that's nothing.—In his
hours

Of confidence with you, has he named the favours
To come—he counts on ?

Joseph. Yes :—a Colonel's rank,
And Letters of Nobility.

Rich. What, Huguet !—

[*Here HUGUET enters, as to address the CARDINAL, who does
not perceive him.*]

Hug. My own name, soft—[*glides behind the screen*].

Rich. Colonel and Nobleman !

My bashful Huguet—that can never be !—

We have him not the less—we'll *promise it* !

And see the King withholds !—Ah, kings are oft
A great convenience to a minister !

No wrong to Huguet either ;—Moralists

Say, Hope is sweeter than Possession !—Yes !—

We'll count on Huguet ! Favours *past* do gorge

Our dogs ! leave service drowsy—dull the scent,

Slacken the speed ;—favours *to come*, my Joseph,

Produce a lusty, hungry gratitude,

A ravenous zeal, that of the commonest cur

Would make a Cerberus.—You are right, this treason

Assumes a fearful aspect :—but once crush'd,

Its very ashes shall manure the soil

Of power ; and ripen such full sheaves of greatness,

That all the summer of my fate shall seem
Fruitless beside the autumn !

[HUGUET holds up his hand menacingly, and creeps out.]

Joseph. The saints grant it !

Rich. [solemnly]. Yes—for sweet France, Heaven grant
it !—O my country,

For thee—thee only—though men deem it not—
Are toil and terror my familiars !—I
Have made thee great and fair—upon thy brows
Wreath'd the old Roman laurel :—at thy feet
Bow'd nations down.—No pulse in my ambition
Whose beatings were not measured from thy heart !
[In the old times before us, patriots lived
And died for liberty—

Joseph. As you would live

And die for despotry—

Rich. False monk, not so.

But for the purple and the power wherein
State clothes herself.—I love my native land
Not as Venetian, Englisher, or Swiss,
But as a Noble and a Priest of France ;
“ All things for France ”—lo, my eternal maxim !
The vital axle of the restless wheels
That bear me on ! With her I have entwined
My passions and my fate—my crimes—my virtues—
Hated and loved,* and schemed, and shed men’s blood

* Richelieu did in fact so thoroughly associate himself with the State, that in cases where the extreme penalty of the law had been incurred, Le Clerc justly observes that he was more inexorable to those he had favoured—even to his own connections—than to other and more indifferent offenders. It must be remembered, as some excuse for his unrelenting sternness, that before his time the great had been accustomed to commit any disorder with impunity, even

As the calm crafts of Tuscan Sages teach
Those who would make their country great. Beyond
The map of France—my heart can travel not,
But fills that limit to its farthest verge ;
And while I live—Richelieu and France are one.]
We Priests, to whom the Church forbids in youth
The plighted one—to manhood's toil denies
The soother helpmate—from our wither'd age

the crime of treason ;—"auparavant on ne faisoit poser les armes aux rebelles qu'en leur accordant quelque récompense." On entering into the administration, he therefore laid it down as a maxim necessary to the existence of the State, that "no crime should be committed with impunity." To carry out this maxim, the long-established license to crime made even justice seem cruel. But the victims most commiserated, from their birth or accomplishments, as Montmorenci, or Cinq Mars, were traitors in actual conspiracy against their country, and would have forfeited life in any land where the punishment of death existed, and the lawgiver was strong enough to vindicate the law. Richelieu was, in fact, a patriot unsoftened by philanthropy. As in Venice (where the favourite aphorism was—"Venice first, Christianity next,"*) so, with Richelieu, the primary consideration was, "What will be best for the country?" He had no abstract principle, whether as a politician or a priest, when applied to the world that lay beyond the boundaries of France. Thus he, whose object was to found in France a splendid and imperious despotism, assisted the Parliamentary party in England, and signed a treaty of alliance and subsidies with the Catalan rebels, for the establishment of a republic in Barcelona : to convulse other monarchies was to consolidate the growing monarchy of France. So he, who completely crushed the Protestant party at home, braved all the wrath of the Vatican, and even the resentment of the King, in giving the most essential aid to the Protestants abroad. There was, indeed, a largeness of view in his hostility to the French Huguenots, which must be carefully distinguished from the intolerance of the mere priest. He opposed them, not as a

* "Pria Veneziana, poi Christiane."

Shuts the sweet blossoms of the second spring
That smiles in the name of Father—we are yet
Not holier than Humanity, and must
Fulfil Humanity's condition—Love !
Debarred the Actual, we but breathe a life
To the chill Marble of the Ideal—Thus,
In thy unseen and abstract Majesty,
My France, my Country, I have bodied forth
A thing to love. What are these robes of state,
This pomp, this palace ? perishable baubles !
In this world two things only are immortal—
Fame and a People !

Enter HUGUET.

Hug. My Lord Cardinal,
Your Eminence bade me seek you at this hour.

Rich. Did I ?—True, Huguet.—So—you overheard
Strange talk amongst these gallants ? Snares and traps
For Richelieu ?—Well—we'll balk them ; let me think—
The men-at-arms you head—how many ?

Hug. Twenty,*
My Lord.

Catholic, but as a statesman. The Huguenots were strong republicans, and had formed plans for dividing France into provincial commonwealths ; and the existence of Rochelle was absolutely incompatible with the integrity of the French monarchy. It was a second capital, held by the Huguenots, claiming independent authority and the right to treat with foreign powers. Richelieu's final conquest was marked by a humanity that had nothing of the bigot. The Huguenots obtained a complete amnesty, and had only to regret the loss of privileges and fortifications which could not have existed with any security to the rest of France.

* The guard attached to Richelieu's person was, in the first instance, fifty arquebusiers, afterwards increased to two companies

Rich. All trusty ?

Hug. Yes, for ordinary
Occasions—if for great ones, I would change
Three-fourths at least.

Rich. Ay, what are great occasions ?

Hug. Great bribes !

Rich. [to JOSEPH]. Good lack, he knows some paragons
Superior to great bribes !

Hug. True Gentlemen
Who have transgress'd the laws—and value life
And lack not gold ; your Eminence alone
Can grant them pardon. *Ergo*, you can trust them !

Rich. Logic !—So be it—let this *honest* twenty
Be arm'd and mounted.—[*Aside.*] So they meet at mid-
night,

The attempt on me to-morrow—Ho ! we'll strike
'Twixt wind and water.—[*Aloud.*] Does it need much
time

To find these ornaments to Human Nature ?

Hug. My Lord—the trustiest of them are not birds
That love the daylight.—I do know a haunt
Where they meet nightly—

Rich. Ere the dawn be grey,
All could be arm'd, assembled, and at Ruelle
In my old hall ?

Hug. By one hour after midnight.

Rich. The castle's strong. You know its outlets,
Huguet ?

of cavalry and two hundred musqueteers. Huguet is therefore to be considered merely as the lieutenant of a small detachment of this little army. In point of fact, the subdivisions of the guard took it in turns to serve.

Would twenty men, well posted, keep such guard
That not one step—(and Murther's step is stealthy)—
Could glide within—unseen ?

Hug. A triple wall—
A drawbridge and portcullis—twenty men
Under my lead, a month might hold that castle
Against a host.

Rich. They do not strike till morning,
Yet I will shift the quarter—Bid the grooms
Prepare the litter—I will hence to Ruelle
While daylight last—and one hour after midnight
You and your twenty saints shall seek me thither !
You're made to rise !—You are, sir ;—eyes of lynx,
Ears of the stag, a footfall like the snow ;
You are a valiant fellow ;—yea, a trusty,
Religious, exemplary, incorrupt,
And precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet !
If I live long enough,—ay, mark my words—
If I live long enough, you'll be a Colonel—
Noble, perhaps !—One hour, sir, after midnight.

Hug. You leave me dumb with gratitude, my Lord ;
I'll pick the trustiest—[*aside.*] Marion's house can furnish !
[*Exit HUGUET.*]

Rich. How like a spider shall I sit in my hole,
And watch the meshes tremble.

Joseph. But, my Lord,
Were it not wiser still to man the palace,
And seize the traitors in the act ?

Rich. No ; Louis,
Long chafed against me—Julie stolen from him,
Will rouse him more. He'll say I hatch'd the treason,
Or scout my charge :—He half desires my death ;

But the despatch to Bouillon, some dark scheme
Against *his* crown—*there* is our weapon, Joseph ;
With that, all safe—without it, all his peril !
Meanwhile to my old castle ; *you* to court,
Diving with careless eyes into men's hearts,
As ghostly churchmen should do ! See the King,
Bid him peruse that sage and holy treatise,
Wherein 'tis set forth how a Premier should
Be chosen from the Priesthood—how the King
Should never listen to a single charge
Against his servant, nor conceal one whisper
That the rank envies of a court distil
Into his ear—to fester the fair name
Of my—I mean his Minister !—Oh ! Joseph,
A most convincing treatise.*

Good—all favours,
If François be but bold, and Huguet honest.
Huguet—I half suspect—he bow'd too low—
'Tis not his way.

Joseph. This is the curse, my Lord,
Of your high state ;—suspicion of all men.

Rich. [*sadly*]. True ;—true ;—my leeches bribed to
poisoners ;—pages
To strangle me in sleep.—My very King
(This brain the unresting loom, from which was woven
The purple of his greatness) leagued against me.

* This tract, on the "Unity of the Minister," contains all the doctrines, and many more to the same effect, referred to in the text, and had a prodigious influence on the conscience of the poor King. At the onset of his career, Richelieu, as deputy of the clergy of Poitou, complained in his harangue to the King that ecclesiastics were too rarely summoned to the royal councils, and invoked the example of the Druids.

Old—childless—friendless—broken—all forsake—
All—all—but—

Joseph. What ?

Rich. The indomitable heart
Of Armand Richelieu !

Joseph. Nought beside ?

Rich. Why, Julie,
My own dear foster-child, forgive me ;—yes ;
This morning, shining through their happy tears,
Thy soft eyes bless'd me !—and thy Lord,—in danger,
He would forsake me not.

Joseph. And Joseph——

Rich. [*after a pause.*] You——

Yes, I believe you—yes—for all men fear you
And the world loves you not. And I, friend Joseph,
I am the only man who could, my Joseph,
Make you a Bishop.* Come, we'll go to dinner,
And talk the while of methods to advance
Our Mother Church.† Ah, Joseph,—*Bishop Joseph !*

* Joseph's ambition was not, however, so moderate ; he refused a bishopric, and desired the cardinal's hat, for which favour Richelieu openly supplicated the Holy See, but contrived somehow or other never to effect it, although two ambassadors applied for it at Rome.

† The peculiar religion of Père Joseph may be illustrated by the following anecdote :—An officer, whom he had dismissed upon an expedition into Germany, moved by conscience at the orders he had received, returned for further explanations, and found the Capuchin *disant sa messe*. He approached and whispered, “ But, my father, if these people defend themselves—” “ Kill all” (*Qu'on tue tout*), answered the good father, continuing his devotions.

ACT III.

SECOND DAY (MIDNIGHT).

SCENE I.—RICHELIEU'S *Castle at Ruelle. A Gothic Chamber.*
Moonlight at the window, occasionally obscured.

*Rich. [reading].** "In silence, and at night, the
Conscience feels

That life should soar to nobler ends than Power."
So sayest thou, sage and sober moralist !
But wert thou tried ? Sublime Philosophy,
Thou art the Patriarch's ladder, reaching heaven,
And bright with beck'ning angels—but, alas !
We see thee, like the Patriarch, but in dreams,
By the first step—dull-slumbering on the earth.
I am not happy !—with the Titan's lust
I woo'd a goddess, and I clasp a cloud.
When I am dust, my name shall, like a star,
Shine through wan space, a glory—and a prophet

* I need not say that the great length of this soliloquy adapts it only for the closet, and that but few of the lines are retained on the stage. To the reader, however, the passages omitted in representation will not, perhaps be the most uninteresting in the play, and may be deemed necessary to the completion of the Cardinal's portrait,—action on the stage supplying so subtly the place of words in the closet. The self-assured sophistries which, in the text, mingle with Richelieu's better-founded arguments, in apology for the darker traits of his character, are to be found scattered throughout the writings ascribed to him. The reader will observe that in this self-confession lies the latent poetical justice, which separates happiness from success.

Whereby pale seers shall from their aëry towers
Con all the ominous signs, benign or evil,
That make the potent astrologue of kings.
But shall the Future judge me by the ends
That I have wrought—or by the dubious means
Through which the stream of my renown hath run
Into the many-voiced unfathom'd Time ?
Foul in its bed lie weeds—and heaps of slime,
And with its waves—when sparkling in the sun,
Ofttimes the secret rivulets that swell
Its might of waters—blend the hues of blood.
Yet are my sins not those of CIRCUMSTANCE,
That all-pervading atmosphere, wherein
Our spirits, like the unsteady lizard, take
The tints that colour, and the food that nurtures ?
* O ! ye, whose hour-glass shifts its tranquil sands
In the unvex'd silence of a student's cell ;
Ye, whose untempted hearts have never toss'd
Upon the dark and stormy tides where life
Gives battle to the elements,—and man
Wrestles with man for some slight plank, whose weight
Will bear but one—while round the desperate wretch
The hungry billows roar—and the fierce Fate,
Like some huge monster, dim-seen through the surf,
Waits him who drops ;—ye safe and formal men,
Who write the deeds, and with unfeverish hand
Weigh in nice scales the motives of the Great,
Ye cannot know what ye have never tried !
History preserves only the fleshless bones
Of what we are—and by the mocking skull
The would-be wise pretend to guess the features !

* Retained in representation.

Without the roundness and the glow of life
How hideous is the skeleton ! Without
The colourings and humanities that clothe
Our errors, the anatomists of schools
Can make our memory hideous !

I have wrought

Great uses out of evil tools—and they
In the time to come may bask beneath the light
Which I have stolen from the angry gods,
And warn their sons against the glorious theft,
Forgetful of the darkness which it broke.
I have shed blood—but I have had no foes
Save those the State had *—if my wrath was deadly,
'Tis that I felt my country in my veins,
And smote her sons as Brutus smote his own.†
And yet I am not happy—blanch'd and sear'd
Before my time—breathing an air of hate,
And seeing daggers in the eyes of men,
And wasting powers that shake the thrones of earth
In contest with the insects—bearding kings
And braved by lackies ‡—murder at my bed ;
And lone amidst the multitudinous web,

* It is well known that when, on his death-bed, Richelieu was asked if he forgave his enemies ; he replied, “ I never had any, but those of the State.” And this was true enough, for Richelieu and the State were one.

† Richelieu's vindication of himself from cruelty will be found in various parts of Petitot's Collection, vols. xxi. xxx. (*bis*).

‡ Voltaire has a striking passage on the singular fate of Richelieu, recalled every hour from his gigantic schemes to frustrate some miserable cabal of the ante-room. Richelieu would often exclaim, that “ Six pieds de terre,” as he called the king's cabinet, “ lui donnaient plus de peine que tout le reste de l'Europe.” The death of

With the dread Three—that are the Fates who hold
The woof and shears—the Monk, the Spy, the Headsman.
And this is power ? Alas ! I am not happy.

[*After a pause.*]

And yet the Nile is fretted by the weeds
Its rising roots not up ; but never yet
Did one least barrier by a ripple vex
My onward tide, unswept in sport away.
Am I so ruthless then that I do hate
Them who hate me ? Tush, tush ! I do not hate ;
Nay, I forgive. The Statesman writes the doom,
But the Priest sends the blessing. I forgive them,
But I destroy ; forgiveness is mine own,
Destruction is the State's ! For private life,
Scripture the guide—for public, Machiavel.
Would fortune serve me if the Heaven were wroth ?
For chance makes half my greatness. I was born
Beneath the aspect of a bright-eyed star,
And my triumphant adamant of soul
Is but the fix'd persuasion of success.
Ah !—here !—that spasm !—again !—How Life and Death
Do wrestle for me momentarily ! And yet

Wallenstein, sacrificed by the Emperor Ferdinand, produced a most lively impression upon Richelieu. He found many traits of comparison between Ferdinand and Louis—Wallenstein and himself. In the Memoirs—now regarded by the best authorities as written by his sanction, and in great part by himself—the great Frenchman bursts (when alluding to Wallenstein's murder) into a touching and pathetic anathema on the *misère de cette vie* of dependence on jealous and timid royalty, which he himself, while he wrote, sustained. It is worthy of remark, that it was precisely at the period of Wallenstein's death that Richelieu obtained from the king an augmentation of his guard.

The King looks pale. I shall outlive the King !
And then, thou insolent Austrian—who didst gibe
At the ungainly, gaunt, and daring lover,*
Sleeking thy looks to silken Buckingham,—
Thou shalt—no matter !—I have outlived love.
O ! beautiful—all golden—gentle youth !
Making thy palace in the careless front
And hopeful eye of man—ere yet the soul
Hath lost the memories which (so Plato dream'd)
Breathed glory from the earlier star it dwelt in—
Oh ! for one gale from thine exulting morning,
Stirring amidst the roses, where of old
Love shook the dew-drops from his glancing hair !
Could I recall the past—or had not set
The prodigal treasures of the bankrupt soul
In one slight bark upon the shoreless sea ;
The yoked steer, after his day of toil,
Forgets the goad, and rests—to me alike
Or day or night—Ambition has no rest !
Shall I resign ?—who can resign himself ?
For custom is ourself ; as drink and food
Become our bone and flesh—the aliments
Nurturing our nobler part, the mind—thoughts, dreams,
Passions, and aims, in the revolving cycle
Of the great alchemy—at length are made
Our mind itself ; and yet the sweets of leisure—
An honour'd home—far from these base intrigues—

* Richelieu was commonly supposed, though I cannot say I find much evidence for it, to have been too presuming in an interview with Anne of Austria (the Queen), and to have bitterly resented the contempt she expressed for him. The Duke of Buckingham's frantic and Quixotic passion for the Queen is well known.

An eyrie on the heaven-kiss'd heights of wisdom—

[*Taking up the book.*]

Speak to me, moralist !—I'll heed thy counsel.

Were it not best——

Enter FRANÇOIS hastily, and in part disguised.

Rich. [*flinging away the book*]. Philosophy, thou liest !
Quick—the despatch ! Power—Empire ! Boy—the
packet !

Fran. Kill me, my Lord.

Rich. They knew thee—they suspected—
They gave it not——

Fran. He gave it—he—the Count
De Baradas—with his own hand he gave it !

Rich. Baradas ! Joy ! out with it !

Fran. Listen,
And then dismiss me to the headsman.

Rich. Ha !
Go on.

Fran. They led me to a chamber—There
Orleans and Baradas, and some half-score,
Whom I know not—were met——

Rich. Not more !

Fran. But from
The adjoining chamber broke the din of voices,
The clattering tread of arm'd men ; at times
A shriller cry, that yell'd out, “Death to Richelieu !”

Rich. Speak not of me : thy country is in danger !
The adjoining room—So, so—a *separate* treason !
The one thy ruin, France !—the meaner crime,
Left to their tools, my murder !

Fran. Baradas

Question'd me close—demurr'd—until, at last,
O'erruled by Orleans,—gave the packet—told me
That life and death were in the scroll—this gold——

Rich. Gold is no proof——

Fran. And Orleans promised thousands,
When Bouillon's trumpets in the streets of Paris
Rang out shrill answer. Hastening from the house,
My footstep in the stirrup, Marion stole
Across the threshold, whispering, "Lose no moment
Ere Richelieu have the packet : tell him too—
Murder is in the winds of Night, and Orleans
Swears, ere the dawn the Cardinal shall be clay."
She said, and trembling fled within ; when, lo !
A hand of iron griped me ; through the dark
Glean'd the dim shadow of an arm'd man :
Ere I could draw—the prize was wrested from me,
And a hoarse voice gasp'd—"Spy, I spare thee, for
This steel is virgin to thy Lord !" with that
He vanish'd.—Scared and trembling for thy safety
I mounted, fled, and, kneeling at thy feet,
Implore thee to acquit my faith—but not,
Like him, to spare my life.

Rich. Who spake of *life* ?

I bade thee grasp that treasure as thine *honour*—
A jewel worth whole hecatombs of lives !
Begone !—redeem thine honour—back to Marion—
Or Baradas—or Orleans—track the robber—
Regain the packet—or crawl on to Age—
Age and grey hairs like mine—and know, thou hast
lost

That which had made thee great and saved thy country.—
See me not till thou'st bought the right to seek me.—

Away !—Nay, cheer thee, thou hast not fail'd yet,—
There's no such word as "fail !"

Fran.

Bless you, my Lord,

For that one smile !—I'll wear it on my heart

To light me back to triumph.*

[*Exit.*

Rich.

The poor youth !

An elder had ask'd life !—I love the young !

For as great men live not in their own time,

But the next race,—so in the young, my soul

Makes many Richelieus. He will win it yet.

François !—He's gone. My murder ! Marion's warning !

This bravo's threat ! Oh for the morrow's dawn !

I'll set my spies to work—I'll make all space

(As does the sun) a Universal Eye—

Huguet shall track—Joseph confess—ha ! ha !

Strange, while I laugh'd I shudder'd—and ev'n now

Through the chill air the beating of my heart

Sounds like a death-watch by a sick man's pillow ;

If Huguet *could* deceive me—hoofs without—

The gates uncloset—steps near and nearer !

Enter JULIE.

Julie.

Cardinal !

My father !

[*Falls at his feet.*

Rich.

Julie at this hour !—and tears !

What ails thee ?

* The fear and the hatred which Richelieu generally inspired were not shared by his dependents and those about his person, who are said "to have adored him."—"Ses domestiques le regardaient comme le meilleur des maîtres."—*Le Clerc*. In fact, although "*il étoit orgueilleux et colère,*"—he was, "*en même temps, affable et plein de douceur dans l'abord ;*" and he was no less generous to those who served than severe to those who opposed him.

Julie. I am safe ; I am with thee !—

Rich. Safe ! why in all the storms of this wide world
What wind would mar the violet ?

Julie. That man—
Why did I love him ?—clinging to a breast
That knows no shelter ?

Listen—late at noon—
The marriage-day—ev'n then no more a lover—
He left me coldly,—well,—I sought my chamber
To weep and wonder—but to hope and dream.
Sudden a mandate from the King—to attend
Forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.

Rich. Ha !
You did obey the summons ; and the King
Reproach'd your hasty nuptials.

Julie. Were that all !
He frown'd and chid ; proclaim'd the bond unlawful :
Bade me not quit my chamber in the palace,
And there at night—alone—this night—all still—
He sought my presence—dared—thou read'st the heart,
Read mine !—I cannot speak it !

Rich. He a king,—
You—woman ; well,—you yielded !

Julie. Cardinal—
Dare you say “ yielded ? ”—Humbled and abash'd,
He from the chamber crept—this mighty Louis ;
Crept like a baffled felon !—yielded ! Ah !
More royalty in woman's honest heart
Than dwells within the crown'd majesty
And sceptred anger of a hundred kings !
Yielded !—Heavens !—yielded !

Rich. To my breast,—close—close !

The world would never need a Richelieu, if
Men—bearded, mail'd men—the Lords of Earth—
Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice, pride,
As this poor child with the dove's innocent scorn
Her sex's tempters, Vanity and Power !—
He left you—well !

Julie. Then came a sharper trial !

At the King's suit the Count de Baradas
Sought me to soothe, to fawn, to flatter, while
On his smooth lip insult appear'd more hateful
For the false mask of pity : letting fall
Dark hints of treachery, with a world of sighs
That Heaven had granted to so base a Lord
The heart whose coldest friendship were to him
What Mexico to misers ! Stung at last
By my disdain, the dim and glimmering sense
Of his cloak'd words broke into bolder light,
And THEN—ah ! then, my haughty spirit fail'd me !
Then I was weak—wept—oh ! such bitter tears !
For (turn thy face aside and let me whisper
The horror to thine ear) then did I learn
That he—that Adrien—that my husband—knew
The King's polluting suit, and deem'd it *honour* !
Then all the terrible and loathsome truth
Glared on me ;—coldness—waywardness, reserve—
Mystery of looks—words—all unravell'd,—and
I saw the impostor, where I had loved the god !

Rich. I think thou wrong'st thy husband—but proceed.

Julie. Did you say “wrong'd” him ?—Cardinal, my father,
Did you say “wrong'd ?” Prove it, and life shall grow
One prayer for thy reward and his forgiveness.

Rich. Let me know all.

Julie. To the despair he caused
The courtier left me ; but amid the chaos
Darted one guiding ray—to 'scape—to fly—
Reach Adrien, learn the worst—'twas then near midnight :
Trembling I left my chamber—sought the Queen—
Fell at her feet—reveal'd the unholy peril—
Implored her aid to flee our joint disgrace.
Moved, she embraced and soothed me ; nay, preserved ;
Her word sufficed to unlock the palace-gates :
I hasten'd home—but home was desolate,—
No Adrien there ! Fearing the worst, I fled
To thee, directed hither. As my wheels
Paused at thy gates—the clang of arms behind—
The ring of hoofs—

Rich. 'Twas but my guards, fair trembler.
(So Huguet keeps his word, my omens wrong'd him.)

Julie. Oh, in one hour what years of anguish crowd !

Rich. Nay, there's no danger now. Thou needest rest.
Come, thou shalt lodge beside me. Tush ! be cheer'd.
My rosiest Amazon—thou wrong'st thy Theseus.
All will be well—yes, yet all well.

[*Exeunt through a side door.*]

SCENE II.

Enter HUGUET—DE MAUPRAT, in complete armour, his vizor down.
The moonlight obscured at the casement.

Hug. Not here !

De Mau. Oh, I will find him, fear not. Hence and
guard

The galleries where the menials sleep—plant sentries

At every outlet—Chance should throw no shadow
Between the vengeance and the victim ! Go !—
Ere yon brief vapour that obscures the moon,
As doth our deed pale conscience, pass away,
The mighty shall be ashes.

Hug. Will you not
A second arm ?

De Mau. To slay one weak old man ?—
Away ! No lesser wrongs than mine can make
This murder lawful. Hence !

Hug. A short farewell !
[Exit HUGUET.]

Re-enter RICHELIEU [not perceiving DE MAUPRAT].

Rich. How heavy is the air !—the vestal lamp
Of the sad Moon, weary with vigil, dies
In the still temple of the solemn heaven !
The very darkness lends itself to fear—
To treason——

De Mau. And to death !

Rich. My omens lied not !
What art thou, wretch ?

De Mau. Thy doomsman !

Rich. Ho, my guards !
Huguet ! Montbrassil ! Vermont !

De Mau. Ay, thy spirits
Forsake thee, wizard ; thy bold men of mail
Are *my confederates*. Stir not ! but one step,
And know the next—thy grave !

Rich. Thou liest, knave !
I am old, infirm—most feeble—but thou liest !
Armand de Richelieu dies not by the hand

Of man—the stars have said it *—and the voice
Of my own prophet and oracular soul
Confirms the shining Sibyls ! Call them all
Thy brother butchers ! Earth has no such fiend—
No ! as one parricide of his father-land,
Who dares in Richelieu murder France !

De Mau.

Thy stars

Deceive thee, Cardinal ; thy soul of wiles
May against kings and armaments avail,
And mock the embattled world ; but powerless now
Against the sword of one resolvèd man,
Upon whose forehead thou hast written shame !

Rich. I breathe ; he is not a hireling. Have I wrong'd
thee ?

Beware surmise—suspicion—lies ! I am
Too great for men to speak the truth of me !

De Mau. Thy *acts* are thy accusers, Cardinal !
In his hot youth, a soldier, urged to crime
Against the State, placed in your hands his life ;—
You did not strike the blow—but o'er his head,
Upon the gossamer thread of your caprice,
Hover'd the axe. His the brave spirit's hell,
The twilight terror of suspense ;—your death
Had set him free ; he purposed not, nor pray'd it.
One day you summon'd—mock'd him with smooth
pardon—

Shower'd wealth upon him—bade an angel's face
Turn Earth to Paradise——

Rich.

Well !

* In common with his contemporaries, Richelieu was credulous in astrology and less lawful arts. He was too fortunate a man not to be superstitious.

De Mau.

Was this mercy ?

A Cæsar's generous vengeance ?—Cardinal, no !

Judas, not Cæsar, was the model ! You

Saved him from death for shame ; reserved to grow

The scorn of living men—to his dead sires

Leptous reproach—scoff of the age to come—

A kind convenience—a Sir Pandarus

To his own bride, and the august adulterer !

Then did the first great law of human hearts,

Which with the patriot's, not the rebel's, name

Crown'd the first Brutus, when the Tarquin fell,

Make Misery royal—raise this desperate wretch

Into thy destiny ! Expect no mercy !

Behold De Mauprat !

[*Lifts his vizor.*]*Rich.*

To thy knees, and crawl

For pardon ; or, I tell thee, thou shalt live

For such remorse, that, did I hate thee, I

Would bid thee strike, that I might be avenged !

It was to save my Julie from the King,

That in thy valour I forgave thy crime ;—

It was, when thou—the rash and ready tool—

Yea, of that shame thou loath'st—didst leave thy hearth

To the polluter—in these arms thy bride .

Found the protecting shelter thine withheld.

[*Goes to the side door.*]

Julie de Mauprat—Julie !

Enter JULIE.

Lo ! my witness !

De Mau. What marvel's this ?—I dream ! my Julie—
thou !

This, thy beloved hand ?

Julie. Henceforth all bond
Between us twain is broken. Were it not
For this old man, I might, in truth, have lost
The right—now mine—to scorn thee !

Rich. So, you hear her ?

De Mau. Thou with some slander hast her sense infected !

Julie. No, sir ; he did excuse thee in despite
Of all that wears the face of truth. Thy friend—
Thy *confidant*—familiar—*Baradas*—
Himself reveal'd thy baseness.

De Mau. Baseness !

Rich. Ay ;
That thou didst court dishonour.

De Mau. Baradas !
Where is thy thunder, Heaven ?—Duped !—snared !—
undone !

Thou—thou couldst not believe him ! Thou dost love me !
Love cannot feed upon falsehoods !

Julie [*aside*]. Love him !—Ah !
Be still, my heart ! [*Aloud.*] Love you I did :—how
fondly,

Woman—if women were my listeners now—
Alone could tell !—For ever fled my dream :
Farewell—all's over !

Rich. Nay, my daughter, these
Are but the blinding mists of day-break love
Sprung from its very light, and heralding
A noon of happy summer.—Take her hand
And speak the truth, with which your heart runs
over—

That this Count Judas—this Incarnate Falsehood—

Never lied more, than when he told thy Julie
That Adrien loved her not—except, indeed,
When he told Adrien, Julie could betray him.

Julie [*embracing* DE MAUPRAT]. You love me, then !—
you love me !—and they wrong'd you !

De Mau. Ah ! couldst thou doubt it ?

Rich.

Why, the very mole

Less blind than thou ! Baradas loves thy wife ;—
Had hoped her hand—aspired to be that cloak
To the King's will, which to thy bluntness seems
The Centaur's poisonous robe—hopes even now
To make thy corpse his footstool to thy bed !
Where was thy wit, man ?—Ho ! these schemes are
glass !

The very sun shines through them.

De Mau.

O, my Lord.

Can you forgive me ?

Rich.

Ay, and save you !

De Mau.

Save !—

Terrible word !—O, save *thyself* ;—these halls
Swarm with thy foes : already for thy blood
Pants thirsty Murder !

Julie.

Murder !

Rich.

Hush ! put by

The woman. Hush ! a shriek—a cry—a breath
Too loud, would startle from its horrent pause
The swooping Death ! Go to the door, and listen !—
Now for escape !

De Mau.

None—none ! Their blades shall pass

This heart to thine.

Rich. [*drily*].

An honourable outwork

But much too near the citadel. I think

That I can trust you now [*slowly, and gazing on him*]:—
yes; I can trust you.

How many of my troop league with you?

De Mau.

All!—

We are your troop!

Rich.

And Huguet?

De Mau.

Is our captain.

Rich. A retributive Power!—This comes of spies!
All? then the lion's skin's too short to-night,—
Now for the fox's!—

Julie.

A hoarse, gathering murmur!—

Hurrying and heavy footsteps!

Rich.

Ha!—the posterns?

De Mau. No egress where no sentry!

Rich.

Follow me—

I have it!—to my chamber—quick! Come, Julie!

Hush! Mauprat, come!

[*Murmur at a distance.*]—Death to the Cardinal!

Rich. Bloodhounds, I laugh at ye!—ha! ha!—we will
Baffle them yet.—Ha!—ha!

[*Exeunt JULIE, MAUPRAT, RICHELIEU.*

Hug. [*without*].

This way—this way!



SCENE III.

Enter HUGUET and the Conspirators.

Hug. De Mauprat's hand is never slow in battle;—
Strange, if it falter now! Ha! gone!

First Con.

Perchance

The fox had crept to rest ; and to his lair
Death, the dark hunter, tracks him.

[Enter MAUPRAT, throwing open the doors of the recess, in
which a bed, whereon RICHELIEU lies extended.]

De Mau.

Live the King !

Richelieu is dead !

Hug. [advancing towards the recess ; MAUPRAT following,
his hand on his dagger]. Are his eyes open ?

De Mau.

Ay,

As if in life !

Hug. [turning back]. I will not look on him.
You have been long.

De Mau.

I watch'd him till he slept.

Heed me.—No trace of blood reveals the deed ;—
Strangled in sleep. His health hath long been broken—
Found breathless in his bed. So runs our tale,
Remember ! Back to Paris—Orleans gives
Ten thousand crowns, and Baradas a lordship,
To him who first gluts vengeance with the news
That Richelieu is in heaven ! Quick, that all France
May share your joy !

Hug.

And you ?

De Mau.

Will stay, to crush

Eager suspicion—to forbid sharp eyes
To dwell too closely on the clay ; prepare
The rites, and place him on his bier—this *my* task.
I leave to you, sirs, the more grateful lot
Of wealth and honours. Hence !

Hug.

I shall be noble !

De Mau. Away !

First Con.

Five thousand crowns !

Omnes. To horse !—to horse ! [Exeunt Conspirators.]

SCENE IV.

Still night—A room in the house of COUNT DE BARADAS, lighted, &c.

ORLEANS *and* DE BERINGHEN.

De Ber. I understand. Mauprat kept guard without :
Knows nought of the despatch—but heads the troop
Whom the poor Cardinal fancies his protectors.
Save us from such protection !

Orle. Yet, if Huguet,
By whose advice and proffers we renounced
Our earlier scheme, should still be Richelieu's minion,
And play us false—

De Ber. The fox must then devour
The geese he gripes (I'm out of it, thank Heaven !)
And you must swear you smelt the trick, but seem'd
To approve the deed—to render up the doers.

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. Julie is fled :—the King, whom now I left
To a most thorny pillow, vows revenge
On her—on Mauprat—and on Richelieu ! Well ;
We loyal men anticipate his wish
Upon the last—and as for Mauprat,— [*Showing a writ.*

De Ber. Hum !
They say the devil invented printing ! Faith,
He has some hand in writing parchment—eh, Count ?
What mischief now ?

Bar. The King, at Julie's flight
Enraged, will brook no rival in a subject—
So on this old offence—the affair of Faviaux—
Ere Mauprat can tell tales of *us*, we build
His bridge between the dungeon and the grave.

Orle. Well ; if our courier can but reach the army,
The cards are ours !—and yet, I own, I tremble.
Our names are in the scroll—discovery, death !

Bar. Success, a crown !

De Ber. [*apart to BARADAS*]. Our future Regent is
No hero.

Bar. [*to DE BERINGHEN*]. But his rank makes others
valiant ;

And on his cowardice I mount to power.
Were Orleans Regent—what were Baradas ?
Oh ! by the way—I had forgot, your Highness,
Friend Huguet whisper'd me, “ Beware of Marion :
I've seen her lurking near the Cardinal's palace.”
Upon that hint, I've found her lodging elsewhere.

Orle. You wrong her, Count. Poor Marion !—she
adores me.

Bar. [*apologetically*]. Forgive me, but—

Enter Page.

Page. My Lord, a rude, strange soldier,
Breathless with haste, demands an audience.

Bar. So !—
The archers ?

Page. In the ante-room, my Lord,
As you desired.

Bar. 'Tis well—admit the soldier. [*Exit Page.*
Huguet !—I bade him seek me here.

Enter HUGUET.

Hug. My Lords,
The deed is done. Now, Count, fulfil your word,
And make me noble !

Bar. Richelieu dead ?—art sure ?
How died he ?

Hug. Strangled in his sleep :—no blood,
No tell-tale violence.

Bar. Strangled ?—monstrous villain !
Reward for murder ! Ho, there ! [*Stamping.*]

Enter Captain with five Archers.

Hug. No, thou durst not !

Bar. Seize on the ruffian—bind him—gag him ! Off
To the Bastile !

Hug. Your word—your plighted faith !

Bar. Insolent liar ! ho, away !

Hug. Nay, Count ;
I have that about me, which——

Bar. Away with him !

[*Exeunt HUGUET and Archers.*]

Now, then, all's safe ; Huguet must die in prison,
So Mauprat :—coax or force the meaner crew
To fly the country. Ha, ha ! thus, your highness,
Great men make use of little men.

De Ber. My Lords,
Since our suspense is ended—you'll excuse me ;
'Tis late—and, *entre nous*, I have not supp'd yet !
I'm one of the new Council now, remember ;
I feel the public stirring here already ;
A very craving monster. *Au revoir !*

[*Exit DE BERINGHEN.*]

Orle. No fear, now Richelieu's dead.

Bar. And could he come
To life again, he could not keep life's life—
His power,—nor save De Mauprat from the scaffold,—
Nor Julie from these arms—nor Paris from
The Spaniard—nor your highness from the throne !
All ours ! all ours ! in spite of my Lord Cardinal !

Enter Page.

Page. A gentleman, my Lord, of better mien
Than he who last——

Bar. Well, he may enter. [*Exit Page.*]

Orle. Who
Can this be ?

Bar. One of the conspirators :
Mauprat himself, perhaps.

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Fran. My Lord——

Bar. Ha, traitor !
In Paris still ?

Fran. The packet—the despatch—
Some knave play'd spy without, and reft it from me,
Ere I could draw my sword.

Bar. Play'd spy *without* ?
Did he wear armour ?

Fran. Ay, from head to heel.

Orle. One of our band. Oh, Heavens !

Bar. Could it be Mauprat ?
Kept guard at the *door*—knew *nought of the despatch*—
How *HE* ?—and yet, who other ?

Fran. Ha, De Mauprat !
The night was dark—his vizor closed.

Bar.

'Twas he !

How could he guess ?—'sdeath ! if he should betray us.
His hate to Richelieu dies with Richelieu—and
He was not great enough for treason. Hence !
Find Mauprat—beg, steal, filch, or force it back,
Or, as I live, the halter——

Fran.

By the morrow

I will regain it [*aside*], and redeem my honour !

[*Exit FRANÇOIS.*]*Orle.* Oh, we are lost——*Bar.*

Not so ! But cause on cause

For Mauprat's seizure—silence—death ! Take courage.

Orle. Should it once reach the King, the Cardinal's arm
Could smite us from the grave.

Bar.

Sir, think it not !

I hold De Mauprat in my grasp. To-morrow,
And France is ours ! Thou dark and fallen Angel,
Whose name on earth's AMBITION—thou that mak'st
Thy throne on treasons, stratagems, and murder,—
And with thy fierce and blood-red smile canst quench
The guiding stars of solemn empire—hear us
(For we are thine)—and light us to the goal !

ACT IV.

THIRD DAY.

SCENE I.—*The Gardens of the Louvre.*—ORLEANS, BARADAS,
DE BERINGHEN, Courtiers, &c.

Orle. How does my brother bear the Cardinal's death ?

Bar. With grief, when thinking of the toils of State ;
With joy, when thinking on the eyes of Julie :—
At times he sighs, " Who now shall govern France ? "
Anon exclaims—" Who now shall baffle Louis ? "

Enter LOUIS and other Courtiers. [*They uncover.*]

Orle. Now, my liege, now, I can embrace a brother.

Louis. Dear Gaston, yes.—I do believe you *love* me ;—
Richelieu denied it—sever'd us too long.

A great man, Gaston ! Who shall govern France ?

Bar. Yourself, my liege. That swart and potent star
Eclipsed your royal orb. He served the country,
But did he *serve*, or seek to *sway* the *King* ?

[*Louis.* You're right—he was an able politician—
That's all :—between ourselves, Count, I suspect
The largeness of his learning—specially
In falcons *—a poor huntsman, too !

* Louis XIII. is said to have possessed some natural talents, and in earlier youth to have exhibited the germs of noble qualities ; but a blight seems to have passed over his maturer life. Personally brave, but morally timid,—always governed, whether by his mother or his minister, and always repining at the yoke. The only affection amounting to a passion that he betrayed was for the sports of the field ; yet it was his craving weakness (and this throws a kind of false interest over his character) to wish to be loved. He himself

Bar.

Ha—ha !

Your Majesty remembers——

Louis.

Ay, the 'blunder

Between the *greffier* and the *souillard* when—

[Checks and crosses himself.

Alas ! poor sinners that we are ! we laugh

While this great man—a priest, a cardinal,

A faithful servant—out upon us !—

Bar.

Sire,

If my brow wear no cloud, 'tis that the Cardinal
No longer shades the King.

Louis [looking up at the skies]. Oh, Baradas !

Am I not to be pitied ?—what a day

For—

Bar. Sorrow ?—No, sire !

Louis.

Bah ! for *hunting*, man,

And Richelieu's dead ; 'twould be an indecorum

Till he is buried—[yawns]—life is very tedious.

I made a madrigal on life last week :

You do not sing,* Count ?—Pity ; you should learn.

loved no one. He suffered the only woman who seems to have been attached to him to wither in a convent ;—he gave up favourite after favourite to exile or the block. When Richelieu died, he said coldly, “Voilà un grand politique mort !” and when the ill-fated but unprincipled Cinq Mars, whom he called “*le cher ami*,” was beheaded, he drew out his watch at the fatal hour, and said with a smile, “I think at this moment that *le cher ami fait une vilaine mine*.” Nevertheless, his conscience at times (for he was devout and superstitious) made him gentle, and his pride and honour would often, when least expected, rouse him into haughty but brief resistance to the despotism under which he lived.

* Louis had some musical taste and accomplishment, wherewith he often communicated to his favourites some of that wearisome *ennui* under which he himself almost unceasingly languished.

Poor Richelieu had no ear—yet a great man.

Ah ! what a weary weight devolves upon me !

These endless wars—these thankless Parliaments—

The snares in which he tangled States and Kings,

Like the old fisher of the fable, Proteus,

Netting great Neptune's wariest tribes, and changing

Into all shapes when Craft pursued himself :

Oh, a great man !

Bar. Your royal mother said so,

And died in exile.

Louis [sadly]. True : I loved my mother.*

Bar. The Cardinal dies. — Yet day revives the
earth ;

The rivers run not back. In truth, my liege,

Did your high orb on others shine as him,

Why, things as dull in their own selves as I am

Would glow as brightly with the borrow'd beam.†

* One of Louis's most bitter complaints against Richelieu was the continued banishment of the Queen Mother. It is impossible, however, not to be convinced that the return of that most worthless intriguante was wholly incompatible with the tranquillity of the kingdom. Yet, on the other hand, the poverty and privation which she endured in exile are discreditable to the generosity and the gratitude of Richelieu ; she was his first patron, though afterwards his most powerful persecutor.

† In his Memoirs, Richelieu gives an amusing account of the insolence and arts of Baradas, and observes, with indignant astonishment, that the favourite was never weary of repeating to the King that he (Baradas) would have made just as great a minister as Richelieu. It is on the attachment of Baradas to La Cressias, a maid of honour to the Queen Mother, of whom, according to Baradas, the King was enamoured also, that his love for the Julie de Mortemar of the play has been founded. The secret of Baradas's sudden and extraordinary influence with the King seems to rest in the personal

Louis. Ahem!—He was too stern.

Orle. A very Nero.

Bar. His power was like the Capitol of old—
Built on a human skull.

Louis. And, had he lived,
I know another head, my Baradas,
That would have propp'd the pile : I've seen him eye thee
With a most hungry fancy.

Bar. [*anxiously*]. Sire, I knew
You would protect me.

Louis. Did you so? of course!
And yet he had a way with him—a something
That always——But no matter—he is dead.
And, after all, men call his King “The Just,” *
And so I am. Dear Count, this silliest Julie,
I know not why, she takes my fancy. Many
As fair, and certainly more kind ; but yet
It is so. Count, I am no lustful Tarquin,
And do abhor the bold and frontless vices
Which the Church justly censures ; yet, 'tis sad
On rainy days to drag out weary hours †—
Deaf to the music of a woman's voice—
Blind to the sunshine of a woman's eyes.

adoration which he professed for Louis, with whom he affected all the jealousy of a lover, but whom he flattered with the ardent chivalry of a knight. Even after his disgrace he placed upon his banner, “Fiat voluntas tua.”

* Louis was called The Just, but for no other reason than that he was born under the Libra.

† Louis XIII. did not resemble either his father or his son in the ardour of his attachments ; if not wholly platonic, they were wholly unimpassioned : yet no man was more jealous, or more unscrupulously tyrannical when the jealousy was aroused.

It is no sin in Kings to seek amusement ;
 And that is all I seek. I miss her much—
 She has a silver laugh—a rare perfection.

Bar. Richelieu was most disloyal in that marriage.]

Louis [*querulously*]. He knew that Julie pleased me :—
 a clear proof

He never loved me !

Bar. Oh, most clear !—But now
 No bar between the lady and your will !
 This writ makes all secure : a week or two
 In the Bastile will sober Mauprat's love,
 And leave him eager to dissolve a hymen
 That brings him such a home.

Louis. See to it, Count.

[*Exit BARADAS.*

I'll summon Julie back. A word with you.

[*Takes aside First Courtier, and DE BERINGHEN, and passes,
 conversing with them, through the Gardens.*

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Fran. All search, as yet, in vain for Mauprat !—Not
 At home since yesternoon—a soldier told me
 He saw him pass this way with hasty strides ;
 Should he meet Baradas—they'd rend it from him—
 And then—benignant Fortune smiles upon me—
 I am thy son !—if thou desert'st me now,
 Come, Death, and snatch me from disgrace. But, no,
 There's a great Spirit ever in the air
 That from prolific and far-spreading wings
 Scatters the seeds of honour—yea, the walls
 And moats of castled forts—the barren seas—
 The cell wherein the pale-eyed student holds

Talk with melodious science—all are sown
With everlasting honours, if our souls
Will toil for fame as boors for bread—

Enter MAUPRAT.

De Mau. Oh, let me—
Let me but meet him foot to foot—I'll dig
The Judas from his heart ;—albeit the King
Should o'er him cast the purple !

Fran. Mauprat ! hold :—
Where is the——

De Mau. Well ! What wouldst thou ?

Fran. The despatch !
The packet.—LOOK ON ME—I serve the Cardinal—
You know me.—Did you not keep guard last night
By Marion's house ?

De Mau. I did ;—no matter now !
They told me, *he was here* !—

Fran. O joy ! quick—quick—
The packet thou didst wrest from me ?

De Mau. The packet ?
What, art thou he I deem'd the Cardinal's spy
(Dupe that I was)—and overhearing Marion—

Fran. The same—restore it ! haste !

De Mau. I have it not :
Methought it but reveal'd our scheme to Richelieu,
And, as we mounted, gave it to——

Enter BARADAS.

Stand back !

Now, villain ! now—I have thee !

[*To FRANÇOIS.*] Hence, sir !—*Drawo !*

Fran. Art mad?—the King's at hand! leave *him* to Richelieu!

Speak—the despatch—to whom—

De Mau. [*dashing him aside, and rushing to BARADAS*].

Thou triple slanderer!

I'll set my heel upon thy crest! [*A few passes.*

Fran. Fly—fly!—

The King!

Enter at one side LOUIS, ORLEANS, DE BERINGHEN, Courtiers, &c. ; *at the other, the Guards hastily.*

Louis. Swords drawn—before our very palace!
Have our laws died with Richelieu?

Bar. Pardon, Sire,—
My crime but self-defence.* [*Aside to King.*] It is De Mauprat!

Louis. Dare he thus brave us?

[*BARADAS goes to the Guard, and gives the writ.*

De Mau. Sire, in the Cardinal's name—

Bar. Seize him—disarm—to the Bastile!

[*DE MAUPRAT seized, struggles with the Guard—FRANÇOIS restlessly endeavouring to pacify and speak to him—when the gates open. Enter RICHELIEU—JOSEPH—followed by Arquebusiers.*

* One of Richelieu's severest and least politic laws was that which made duelling a capital crime. Never was the punishment against the offence more relentlessly enforced; and never were duels so desperate and so numerous. The punishment of death must be evidently ineffectual so long as to refuse a duel is to be dishonoured, and so long as men hold the doctrine, however wrong, that it is better to part with the life that Heaven gave than the honour man makes. In fact, the greater the danger he incurred, the greater was the punctilio of the cavalier of that time in braving it.

Bar.

The Dead

Return'd to life !

*Louis.*What a *mock* death ! this tops

The Infinite of Insult.

De Mau. [*breaking from the Guards*]. Priest and Hero !—
For you are both—protect the truth !*Rich.* [*taking the writ from the Guard*]. What's this ?*De Ber.* Fact in Philosophy. Foxes have got
Nine lives, as well as cats !*Bar.*

Be firm, my liege.

Louis. I have assumed the sceptre—I will wield it !*Joseph.* The tide runs counter—there'll be shipwreck
somewhere.

[BARADAS and ORLEANS keep close to the King, whispering
and prompting him when RICHELIEU speaks.]

Rich. High treason—Faviaux ! still that stale pretence !
My liege, bad men (ay, Count, most *knavish* men !)
Abuse your royal goodness. For this soldier,
France hath none braver—and his youth's hot folly,
Misled—(by whom *your Highness* may conjecture !)—
Is long since cancell'd by a loyal manhood.—
I, Sire, have pardon'd him.*Louis.*

And we do give

Your pardon to the winds. Sir, do your duty !

Rich. What, Sire ?—you do not know—Oh, pardon
me—You know not yet, that this brave, honest heart,
Stood between mine and murder !—Sire ! for my sake—
For your old servant's sake—undo this wrong.
See, let me rend the sentence.*Louis.*

At your peril !

This is too much :—Again, sir, do your duty !

Rich. Speak not, but go :—I would not see young Valour
So humbled as grey Service.

De Mau.

Fare you well !

Save Julie, and console her.

Fran. [*aside to MAUPRAT*]. The despatch !

Your fate, foes, life, hang on a word !—to whom ?

De Mau. To Huguet.

Fran. Hush—keep counsel !—silence—hope !

[*Exeunt MAUPRAT and Guard.*]

Bar. [*aside to FRANÇOIS*]. Has he the packet ?

Fran. He will not reveal—

[*Aside.*] Work, brain !—beat, heart !—“ *There’s no such
word as fail !*”

[*Exit FRANÇOIS.*]

Rich. [*fiercely*]. Room, my Lords, room !—the Minister
of France

Can need no intercession with the King. [*They fall back.*]

Louis. What means this false report of death, Lord
Cardinal ?

Rich. Are you then anger’d, Sire, that I live still ?

Louis. No ; but such artifice—

Rich. Not mine :—look elsewhere !

Louis—my castle swarm’d with the assassins.

Bar. [*advancing*]. We have punish’d them already.
Huguet now

In the Bastile.—Oh ! my Lord, *we* were prompt
To avenge you—*we* were—

Rich.

WE ?—Ha, ha ! you hear,

My liege ! What page, man, in the last court grammar
Made you a plural ? Count, you have seized the *hireling* :—
Sire, shall I name the *master* ?

Louis.

Tush, my Lord,

The old contrivance :—ever does your wit

Invent assassins,—that ambition may
Slay rivals——

Rich. Rivals, Sire, in what ?
Service to France ? *I have none !* Lives the man
Whom Europe, paled before your glory, deems
Rival to Armand Richelieu ?

Louis. What, so haughty !
Remember, he who made, can unmake.

Rich. Never !
Never ! Your anger can recall your trust,
Annul my office, spoil me of my lands,
Rifle my coffers,—but my name—my deeds,
Are royal in a land beyond your sceptre !
Pass sentence on me, if you will ; from Kings,
Lo ! I appeal to time ! [Be just, my liege—
I found your kingdom rent with heresies
And bristling with rebellion ; lawless nobles
And breadless serfs ; England fomenting discord ;
Austria—her clutch on your dominion ; Spain
Forging the prodigal gold of either Ind
To arm'd thunderbolts. The Arts lay dead,
Trade rotted in your marts, your Armies mutinous,
Your Treasury bankrupt. Would you now revoke
Your trust, so be it ! and I leave you, sole
Supremest Monarch of the mightiest realm,
From Ganges to the Icebergs :—Look without ;
No foe not humbled !—Look within ; the Arts
Quit for your schools—their old Hesperides
The golden Italy ! while through the veins
Of your vast empire flows in strengthening tides
TRADE, the calm health of nations !

Sire, I know

Your smother courtiers please you best—nor measure
 Myself with them,—yet sometimes I would doubt
 If Statesmen rock'd and dandled into power
 Could leave such legacies to kings !

[LOUIS *appears irresolute.*

Bar. [passing him, *whispers*]. But Julie,
 Shall I not summon her to court ?]

Louis [motions to BARADAS, and turns haughtily to the
 Cardinal]. Enough !

Your Eminence must excuse a longer audience.
 To your own palace :—For our conference, this
 Nor place—nor season.

Rich. Good my liege, for *Justice*
 All place a temple, and all season, summer !—
 Do you deny me justice ?—Saints of Heaven !
 He turns from me !—*Do you deny me justice ?*
 For fifteen years, while in these hands dwelt Empire,
 The humblest craftsman—the obscurest vassal—
 The very leper shrinking from the sun,
 Though loathed by Charity, might ask for justice !—
 Not with the fawning tone and crawling mien
 Of some I see around you—Counts and Princes—
 Kneeling for *favours* ;—but, erect and loud,
 As men who ask man's rights !—my liege, my Louis,
 Do you refuse me justice—audience even—
 In the pale presence of the baffled Murther ?*

* For the haughty and rebuking tone which Richelieu assumed in his expostulations with the King, see his *Memoirs* (*passim*) in Petitot's collection, vols. 22-30 (*bis*). Montesquieu, in one of his brilliant antitheses, says well of Richelieu, "Il avila le roi, mais il illustra le règne."

Louis. Lord Cardinal—one by one you have sever'd
from me

The bonds of human love. All near and dear
Mark'd out for vengeance—exile or the scaffold.
You find me now amidst my trustiest friends,
My closest kindred ;—you would tear them from me ;
They murder *you* forsooth, since *me* they love !
Eno' of plots and treasons for one reign !
Home !—Home ! and sleep away these phantoms !

Rich. Sire !

I——patience, Heaven !—sweet Heaven ! Sire, from the
foot

Of that Great Throne, these hands have raised aloft
On an Olympus, looking down on mortals
And worshipp'd by their awe—before the foot
Of that high throne,—spurn you the grey-hair'd man,
Who gave you empire—and now sues for safety ?

Louis. No :—when we see your Eminence in truth
At the *foot* of the throne—we'll listen to you.

[*Exit* LOUIS.]

Orle. Saved !

Bar. For this deep thanks to Julie and to Mauprat !

Rich. My Lord de Baradas—I pray your pardon—
You are to be my successor !—your hand, sir !

Bar. [*aside*]. What can this mean ?

Rich. It trembles, see ! it trembles !
The hand that holds the destinies of nations
Ought to shake less !—poor Baradas—poor France !

Bar. Insolent——

[*Exeunt* BARADAS and ORLEANS.]

SCENE II.

Rich. Joseph—Did you hear the King ?

Joseph. I did—there's danger ! Had you been less
haughty*——

Rich. And suffer'd slaves to chuckle — “See the
Cardinal——

How meek his Eminence is to-day”——I tell thee
This is a strife in which the loftiest look
Is the most subtle armour——

Joseph. But——

Rich. No time

For ifs and buts. I will accuse these traitors !
François shall witness that De Baradas
Gave him the secret missive for De Bouillon,
And told him life and death were in the scroll.
I will—I will——

Joseph. Tush ! François is your creature ;
So they will say, and laugh at you !—*your witness*
Must be that same Despatch.

* However “*orgueilleux*” and “*colère*” in his disputes with Louis, the Cardinal did not always disdain recourse to the arts of the courtier ; once, after an angry discussion with the King, in which, as usual, Richelieu got the better, Louis, as they quitted the palace together, said, rudely, “Sortez le premier ; vous êtes bien le roi de France.” “Si je passe le premier,” replied the minister, after a moment's hesitation, and with great adroitness, “ce ne peut être que comme le plus humble de vos serviteurs ;” and he took a flambeau from one of the pages to light the King as he walked before him—“en reculant et sans tourner le dos.”

Rich. Away to Marion !

Joseph. I have been there—she is seized—removed—
imprison'd—

By the Count's orders.

Rich. Goddess of bright dreams,
My country—shalt thou lose me now, when most
Thou need'st thy worshipper ? My native land !
Let me but ward this dagger from thy heart,
And die—but on thy bosom !

Enter JULIE.

Julie. Heaven ! I thank thee !
It cannot be, or this all-powerful man
Would not stand idly thus.

Rich. What dost *thou* here ?
Home !

Julie. Home !—is *Adrien* there ?—you're dumb—yet
strive
For words ; I see them trembling on your lip,
But choked by pity. It *was* truth—all truth !
Seized—the Bastille—and in your presence, too !
Cardinal, where is *Adrien* ?—Think—he saved
Your life :—your name is infamy, if wrong
Should come to his !

Rich. Be soothed, child.

Julie. Child no more ;
I love, and I am woman ! Hope and suffer—
Love, suffering, hope,—what else doth make the strength
And majesty of woman ?—Where is *Adrien* ?

Rich. [to JOSEPH]. Your youth was never young—you
never loved :—
Speak to her—

Joseph. Nay, take heed—the King's command,
'Tis true—I mean—the—

Julie [to RICHELIEU]. Let thine eyes meet mine ;
Answer me but one word—I am a wife—
I ask thee for my *home*—my FATE—my ALL !
Where is my *husband* ?

Rich. You are Richelieu's ward,
A soldier's bride : they who insist on truth
Must out-face fear ;—you ask me for your husband ?
There—where the clouds of Heaven look darkest, o'er
The domes of the Bastille !

Julie. I thank you, father ;
You see I do not shudder. Heaven forgive you
The sin of this desertion !

Rich. [detaining her]. Whither wouldst thou ?

Julie. Stay me not. Fie ! I should be there already.
I am thy ward, and haply he may think
Thou'st taught *me* also to forsake the wretched !

Rich. I've fill'd those cells—with many—traitors all.
Had *they* wives too ?—Thy memories, Power, are solemn !
Poor sufferer !—think'st thou that yon gates of woe
Unbar to love ? Alas ! if love once enter,
'Tis for the last farewell ; between those walls
And the mute grave *—the blessed household sounds
Only heard once—while hungering at the door,
The headsman whets the axe.

Julie. O, mercy ! mercy !
Save him, restore him, father ! Art thou not
The Cardinal-King ?—the Lord of life and death—

* “Selon l'usage de Louis XIII., faire arrêter quelqu'un pour crime d'état, et le faire mourir, l'était à peu près la même chose.”—
Le Clerc.

Beneath whose light, as deeps beneath the moon,
The solemn tides of Empire ebb and flow ?
Art thou not Richelieu ?

Rich. Yesterday I was !—
To-day, a very weak old man !—To-morrow,
I know not what !

Julie. Do you conceive his meaning ?
Alas ! I cannot. But, methinks, my senses
Are duller than they were !

Joseph. The King is chafed
Against his servant. Lady, while we speak,
The lackey of the ante-room is not
More powerless than the Minister of France.

[*Rich.* And yet the air is still ; Heaven wears no cloud ;
From Nature's silent orbit starts no portent
To warn the unconscious world ; albeit this night
May with a morrow teem which, in my fall,
Would carry earthquake to remotest lands,
And change the Christian globe. What wouldst thou,
woman ?

Thy fate and his, with mine, for good or ill,
Are woven threads. In my vast sum of life
Millions such units merge.]

Enter First Courtier.

First Cour. Madame de Mauprat !
Pardon, your Eminence—even now I seek
This lady's home—commanded by the King
To pray her presence.

Julie [*clinging to RICHELIEU*]. Think of my dead
father !—
Think, how, an infant, clinging to your knees,

And looking to your eyes, the wrinkled care
Fled from your brow before the smile of childhood,
Fresh from the dews of Heaven ! Think of this,
And take me to your breast.

Rich.

To those who sent you !—

And say you found the virtue they would slay
Here—couch'd upon this heart, as at an altar,
And shelter'd by the wings of sacred Rome !
Begone !

First Cour. My Lord, I am your friend and servant—
Misjudge me not ; but never yet was Louis
So roused against you :—shall I take this answer ?—
It were to be your foe.

Rich.

All time my foe,

If I, a Priest, could cast this holy Sorrow
Forth from her last asylum !

First Cour.

He is lost ! [*Exit First Courtier.*

Rich. God help thee, child !—she hears not ! Look
upon her !

The storm, that rends the oak, uproots the flower.
Her father loved me so ! and in that age
When friends are brothers ! She has been to me
Soother, nurse, plaything, daughter. Are these tears ? *
Oh ! shame, shame !—dotage !

* Like Cromwell and Rienzi, Richelieu appears to have been easily moved to tears. The Queen Mother, who put the hardest interpretation on that humane weakness, which is natural with very excitable temperaments, said that “il pleurait quand il voulait.” I may add, to those who may be inclined to imagine that Richelieu appears in parts of this scene too dejected for consistency with so imperious a character, that it is recorded of him that “quand ses affaires ne réussissoient pas, il se trouvoit abattu et epouvanté, et quand il obtenoit ce qu'il souhaitoit, il étoit fier et insultant.”

Joseph.

Tears are not for eyes

That rather need the lightning, which can pierce
Through barrèd gates and triple walls, to smite
Crime, where it cowers in secret !—The Despatch !
Set every spy to work ;—the morrow's sun
Must see that written treason in your hands,
Or rise upon your ruin.

Rich.

Ay—and close

Upon my corpse !—I am not made to live—
Friends, glory, France, all reft from me ;—my star
Like some vain holiday mimicry of fire,
Peircing imperial Heaven, and falling down
Rayless and blacken'd, to the dust—a thing
For all men's feet to trample ! Yea !—to-morrow
Triumph or death ! Look up, child !—Lead us, Joseph.

[As they are going out, enter BARADAS and DE BERINGHEN.]

Bar. My Lord, the King cannot believe your Eminence
So far forgets your duty, and his greatness,
As to resist his mandate ! Pray you, Madam,
Obeys the King—no cause for fear !

Julie.

My father !

Rich. She shall not stir !

Bar.

You are not of her kindred—

An orphan—

Rich.

And her country is her mother !

Bar. The country is the King !

Rich.

Ay, is it so?—

Then wakes the power which in the age of iron
Burst forth to curb the great, and raise the low.
Mark, where she stands !—around her form I draw
The awful circle of our solemn church !
Set but a foot within that holy ground,

And on thy head—yea, though it wore a crown—
I launch the curse of Rome !

Bar. I dare not brave you !
I do but speak the orders of my King,
The church, your rank, power, very word, my Lord,
Suffice you for resistance :—blame yourself,
If it should cost you power !

Rich. That *my* stake.—Ah !
Dark gamester ! *what is thine ?* Look to it well !—
Lose not a trick.—By this same hour to-morrow
Thou shalt have France, or I thy head !

Bar. [*aside to DE BERINGHEN*]. He cannot
Have the Despatch ?

De Ber. No : were it so, your stake
Were lost already.

Joseph [*aside*]. Patience is your game :
Reflect, you have not the Despatch !

Rich. O ! monk !
Leave patience to the saints—for *I* am human !
Did not thy father die for France, poor orphan ?
And now they say thou hast *no* father !—Fie !
Art thou not pure and good ?—if so, thou art
A part of that—the Beautiful, the Sacred—
Which, in all climes, men that have hearts adore,
By the great title of their mother country !

Bar. [*aside*]. He wanders !

Rich. So cling close unto my breast,
Here where thou droop'st lies France. I am very
feeble—

Of little use it seems to either now.
Well, well—we will go home.

Bar. In sooth, my Lord,

You do need rest—the burthens of the State
O'ertask your health !

Rich. [to JOSEPH]. I'm patient, see !

Bar. [aside]. His mind

And life are breaking fast !

Rich. [overhearing him]. Irreverent ribald !

If so, beware the falling ruins ! Hark !

I tell thee, scorner of these whitening hairs,

When this snow melteth there shall come a flood !

Avaunt ! my name is Richelieu—I defy thee !

Walk blindfold on ; behind thee stalks the headsman.

Ha ! ha !—how pale he is ! Heaven save my country !

[*Falls back in JOSEPH's arms.*]

[BARADAS *exit*, followed by DE BERINGHEN, betraying his
exultation by his gestures.]

ACT V.

FOURTH DAY.

SCENE I.—*The Bastille—a Corridor ; in the back-ground the door
of one of the condemned cells.*

Enter JOSEPH and Gaoler.

Gaoler. Stay, father ; I will call the Governor.

[*Exit Gaoler.*]

Joseph. He has it, then—this Huguet ;—so we learn
From François ;—Humph ! Now if I can but gain
One moment's access, all is ours ! The Cardinal
Trembles 'tween life and death. His life is power ;
Smite one—slay both ! No Æsculapian drugs,

Joseph. I do beseech you—
The Cardinal is *not* dying. But one moment,
And—hist !—five thousand pistoles !—

Gov. How ! a bribe !—
And to a soldier, grey with years of honour !
Begone !—

Joseph. Ten thousand—twenty !—

Gov. Gaoler ; put
This monk without our walls.

Joseph. By those grey hairs—
Yea, by this badge [*touching the cross of St. Louis worn
by the Governor*]—The guerdon of your valour—
By all your toils—hard days and sleepless nights—
Borne in your country's service, noble son—
Let me but see the prisoner !—

Gov. No !

Joseph. He hath
Secrets of state—papers in which——

Gov. [*interrupting*]. I know—
Such was his message to Count Baradas :
Doubtless the Count will see to it !

Joseph. The Count !
Then not a hope !—You shall——

Gov. Betray my trust !
Never—not one word more. You heard me, gaoler !

Joseph. What can be done?—Distraction ! Richelieu yet
Must—what?—I know not ! Thought, nerve, strength,
forsake me.

Dare you refuse the Church her holiest rights ?

Gov. I refuse nothing—I obey my orders.

Joseph. And sell your country to her parricides !
Oh, tremble yet !—Richelieu——

Gov. Begone !

Joseph. Undone ! [*Exit JOSEPH.*]

Gov. A most audacious shaveling—interdicted
Above all others by the Count.

Gaoler. I hope, sir,
I shall not lose my perquisites. The Sieur
De Mauprat will not be reprieved ?

Gov. Oh, fear not :
The Count's commands by him who came for Mauprat
Are to prepare headsman and axe by noon ;
The Count will give you perquisites enough—
Two deaths in one day !

Gaoler. Sir, may Heaven reward him !
Oh, by the way, that troublesome young fellow,
Who calls himself the prisoner Huguet's son
Is here again—implores, weeps, raves to see him.

Gov. Poor youth, I pity him !

Enter DE BERINGHEN, followed by FRANÇOIS.

De Ber. [*to FRANÇOIS*]. Now, prithee, friend,
Let go my cloak ; you really discompose me.

Fran. No, they will drive me hence : my father ! Oh !
Let me but see him once—but once—one moment !

De Ber. [*to Governor*]. Your servant, Messire ; this
poor rascal, Huguet,
Has sent to see the Count de Baradas
Upon state secrets, that afflict his conscience.
The Count can't leave his Majesty an instant :
I am his proxy.

Gov. The Count's word is law !
Again, young scapegrace ! How com'st thou admitted ?

De Ber. Oh ! a most filial fellow : Huguet's son !

I found him whimpering in the court below.
I pray his leave to say good-bye to father,
Before that very long, unpleasant journey,
Father's about to take. Let him wait here
Till I return.

Fran. No ; take me with you.

De Ber.

Nay ;

After *me*, friend—the Public first !

Gov.

The Count's

Commands are strict. No one must visit Huguet
Without his passport.

De Ber.

Here it is ! Pshaw ! nonsense !

I'll be your surety. See, my Cerberus,
He is no Hercules !

Gov.

Well, you're responsible.

Stand there, friend. If, when you come out, my Lord,
The youth slip in, 'tis *your* fault.

De Ber.

So it is !

[*Exit through the door of the cell, followed by the Gaoler.*]

Gov. Be calm, my lad. Don't fret so. I had once
A father, too ! I'll not be hard upon you,
And so, stand close. I must not *see* you enter :
You understand ! Between this innocent youth
And that intriguing monk there is, in truth,
A wide distinction.

Re-enter Gaoler.

Come, we'll go our rounds ;
I'll give you just one quarter of an hour ;
And if my Lord leave first, make my excuse.
Yet stay, the gallery's long and dark : no sentry
Until he reach the grate below. He'd best

Wait till I come. If he should lose the way,
We may not be in call.

Fran.

I'll tell him, sir.

[*Exeunt Governor and Gaoler.*

He's a wise son that knoweth his own father.

I've forged a precious one ! So far, so well !

Alas ! what then ? this wretch hath sent to Baradas—

Will sell the scroll to ransom life. Oh, Heaven !

On what a thread hangs hope ! [Listens at the door.

Loud words—a cry !

[Looks through the keyhole.

They struggle ! Ho !—the packet !!!

[Tries to open the door.

Lost ! He has it—

The courtier has it—Huguet, spite his chains,

Grapples !—well done ! Now—now ! [Draws back.

The gallery's long—

And this is left us !

[Drawing his dagger, and standing behind the door. Re-enter

DE BERINGHEN with the packet.

Victory !

Yield it, robber—

Yield it—or die—

[A short struggle.

De Ber.

Off ! ho !—there !—

Fran. [grappling with him].

Death or honour !

[Exeunt struggling.

SCENE II.

The King's closet at the Louvre. A suite of rooms in perspective at one side."

BARADAS and ORLEANS.

Bar. All smiles ! the Cardinal's swoon of yesterday
Heralds his death to-day. Could he survive,
It would not be as minister—so great
The King's resentment at the priest's defiance !
All smiles !—And yet, should this accursed De Mauprat
Have given our packet to another—'Sdeath !
I dare not think of it !

Orle. You've sent to search him ?

Bar. Sent, sir, to search ?—that hireling hands may find
Upon him, naked, with its broken seal,
That scroll, whose every word is death ! No—No—
These hands alone must clutch that awful secret.
I dare not leave the palace, night nor day,
While Richelieu lives—his minions—creatures—spies—
Not one must reach the King !

Orle. What hast thou done ?

Bar. Summon'd De Mauprat hither.

Orle. Could this Huguet,

Who pray'd thy presence with so fierce a fervour,
Have thieved the scroll ?

Bar. Huguet was housed with us,
The very moment we dismiss'd the courier.
It cannot be ! a stale trick for reprieve.

But, to make sure, I've sent our trustiest friend
To see and sift him.—Hist !—here comes the King—
How fare you, Sire ?

Enter LOUIS.

Louis. In the same mind. I have
Decided !—Yes, he would forbid your presence,
My brother—yours, my friend,—then Julie, too !
Thwarts—braves—defies—*[suddenly turning to BARADAS]*
We make you minister.
Gaston, for you—the bâton of our armies.
You love me, do you not ?

Orle. Oh, love you, Sire ?
[Aside.] Never so much as now.

Bar. May I deserve
Your trust *[aside]* until you sign your abdication !
My liege, but one way left to daunt De Mauprat,
And Julie to divorce.—We must prepare
The death-writ ; what, though sign'd and seal'd ? we can
Withhold the enforcement.

Louis. Ah, you may prepare it ;
We need not urge it to effect.

Bar. Exactly !
No haste, my liege. *[Looking at his watch and aside.]* He
may live one hour longer.

Enter Courtier.

Court. The Lady Julie, Sire, implores an audience.

Louis. Aha ! repentant of her folly !—Well,
Admit her.

Bar. Sire, she comes for Mauprat's pardon,
And the conditions——

Louis. You are minister—
We leave to you our answer.

[As JULIE enters, the Captain of the Archers by another door, and whispers BARADAS.

Capt. The Chevalier
De Mauprat waits below.

Bar. [aside]. Now the despatch !
[Exit with Officer.

Enter JULIE.

Julie. My liege, you sent for me. I come where Grief
Should come when guiltless, while the name of King
Is holy on the earth ! Here, at the feet
Of Power, I kneel for mercy.

Louis. Mercy, Julie,
Is an affair of state. The Cardinal should
In this be your interpreter.

Julie. Alas !
I know not if that mighty spirit now
Stoop to the things of earth. Nay, while I speak,
Perchance he hears the orphan by the throne
Where kings themselves need pardon ; O my liege,
Be father to the fatherless ; in you
Dwells my last hope !

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. [aside]. He has not the despatch ;
Smiled, while we search'd, and braves me.—Oh !

Louis [gently]. What wouldst thou ?

Julie. A single life.—You reign o'er millions.—What
Is *one man's* life to you ?—and yet to *me*
'Tis France—'tis earth—'tis everything !—a life—
A human life—my husband's.

Louis [*aside*]. Speak to her,
I am not marble,—give her hope—or——

Bar. Madam,
Vex not your King, whose heart, too soft for justice,
Leaves to his ministers that solemn charge.

[LOUIS *walks up the stage.*

Julie. You were his friend.

Bar. I *was* before I loved thee.

Julie. Loved me !

Bar. Hush, Julie : couldst thou misinterpret
My acts, thoughts, motives, nay, my very words,
Here—in this palace ?

Julie. Now I know I'm mad ;
Even that memory fail'd me.

Bar. I am young,
Well-born and brave as Mauprat !—for thy sake
I peril what he has not—fortune—power ;
All to great souls most dazzling. I alone
Can save thee from yon tyrant, now my puppet !
Be mine ; annul the mockery of this marriage,
And on the day I clasp thee to my breast
De Mauprat shall be free.

Julie. Thou durst not speak
Thus in *his* ear [*pointing to LOUIS*]. Thou double traitor !
—tremble !

I will unmask thee.

Bar. I will say thou ravest.
And see this scroll ! its letters shall be blood !
Go to the King, count with me word for word ;
And while you pray the life—I write the sentence !

Julie. Stay, stay [*rushing to the King*]. You have a
kind and princely heart,

Tho' sometimes it is silent : you were born
To *power*—it has not flush'd you into madness,
As it doth meaner men. Banish my husband—
Dissolve our marriage—cast me to that grave
Of human ties, where hearts congeal to ice,
In the dark convent's everlasting winter—
(Surely eno' for justice—hate—revenge)—
But spare this life, thus lonely, scath'd, and bloomless ;
And when thou stand'st for judgment on thine own,
The deed shall shine beside thee as an angel.
Louis [*much affected*]. Go, go, to Baradas : annul thy
marriage,

And——

Julie [*anxiously, and watching his countenance*]. Be his
bride !

Louis. A form, a mere decorum ;
Thou know'st I love thee.

Julie. O thou sea of shame,
And not one star !

[*The King goes up the stage, and passes through the suite of
rooms at the side, in evident emotion.*]

Bar. Well, thy election, Julie ;
This hand—his grave !

Julie. His grave ! and I——

Bar. Can save him.—
Swear to be mine.

Julie. That were a bitterer death !
Avaunt, thou tempter ! I did ask his life
A boon, and not the barter of dishonour.
The heart can break, and scorn you : wreak your malice ;
Adrien and I will leave you this sad earth,
And pass together hand in hand to Heaven !

Bar. You have decided.

[Withdraws to the side scene for a moment, and returns.]

Listen to me, Lady ;

I am no base intriguer. I adored thee
From the first glance of those inspiring eyes ;
With thee entwined ambition, hope, the future.
I will not lose thee ! I can place thee nearest—
Ay, to the throne—nay, on the throne, perchance ;
My star is at its zenith. Look upon me ;
Hast thou decided ?

Julie. No, no ; you can see
How weak I am : be human, sir—one moment.

Bar. *[stamping his foot, DE MAUPRAT appears at the side of the stage guarded]*. Behold thy husband !—Shall
he pass to death,

And know thou couldst have saved him ?

Julie. Adrien, speak !
But say you wish to *live* !—if not, your wife,
Your slave,—do with me as you will.

De Mau. Once more !—
Why this is mercy, Count ! Oh, think, my Julie,
Life, at the best, is short,—but love immortal !

Bar. *[taking JULIE'S hand]*. Ah, loveliest—

Julie. Go, that touch has made me iron.
We have decided—death !

Bar. *[to DE MAUPRAT]*. Now say to whom
Thou gavest the packet, and thou yet shalt live.

De Mau. I'll tell thee nothing !

Bar. Hark,—the rack !

De Mau. Thy penance
For ever, wretch !—What rack is like the conscience ?

Julie. I shall be with thee soon.

Bar. [*giving the writ to the Officer.*] Hence, to the headsman !

[*The doors are thrown open. The Huissier announces "His Eminence the Cardinal Duke de Richelieu."*]

Enter RICHELIEU, attended by Gentlemen, Pages, &c., pale, feeble, and leaning on JOSEPH, followed by three Secretaries of State, attended by Sub-Secretaries with papers, &c.

Julie [*rushing to RICHELIEU*]. You live—you live—and Adrien shall not die !

Rich. Not if an old man's prayers, himself near death, Can aught avail thee, daughter ! Count, you now Hold what I held on earth :—one boon, my Lord, This soldier's life.

Bar. The stake,—my head !—you said it. I cannot lose one trick.—Remove your prisoner.

Julie. No !—No !—

Enter LOUIS from the rooms beyond.

Rich. [*to Officer*]. Stay, Sir, one moment. My good liege, Your worn-out servant, willing, Sire, to spare you Some pain of conscience, would forestall your wishes. I do resign my office.

De Mau. You !

Julie. All's over !

Rich. My end draws near. These sad ones, Sire, I love them.

I do not ask his life ; but suffer justice
To halt, until I can dismiss his soul,
Charged with an old man's blessing.

Louis. Surely !

Bar. Sire——

Louis. Silence—small favour to a dying servant.

Rich. You would consign your armies to the bâton

Of your most honoured brother. Sire, so be it !
 Your minister, the Count de Baradas ;
 A most sagacious choice !—Your Secretaries
 Of State attend me, Sire, to render up
 The ledgers of a realm. I do beseech you,
 Suffer these noble gentlemen to learn
 The nature of the glorious task that waits them,
 Here, in my presence.

Louis.

You say well, my Lord.

[*To Secretaries, as he seats himself.*

Approach, Sirs.

Rich.

I—I—faint !—air—air !

[*JOSEPH and a Gentleman assist him to a sofa, placed
 beneath a window.*

I thank you—

Draw near, my children.

Bar.

He's too weak to question.

Nay, scarce to speak ; all's safe.



SCENE III.

*Manent RICHELIEU, MAUPRAT, and JULIE, the last kneeling beside
 the Cardinal ; the Officer of the Guard behind MAUPRAT. JOSEPH
 near RICHELIEU, watching the King. LOUIS. BARADAS at the back
 of the King's chair, anxious and disturbed. ORLEANS at a greater
 distance, careless and triumphant. The Secretaries. As each Secre-
 tary advances in his turn, he takes the portfolios from the Sub-
 Secretaries.*

First Sec.

The affairs of Portugal,

Most urgent, Sire : One short month since the Duke
 Braganza was a rebel.

Louis.

And is still !

First Sec. No, Sire, *he has succeeded !* He is now

Crown'd King of Portugal—craves instant succour
Against the arms of Spain.

Louis. We will not grant it
Against his lawful king. Eh, Count?

Bar. No, Sire.

First Sec. But Spain's your deadliest foe : whatever
Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal
Would send the succours :—[solemnly]—balance, Sire, of
Europe !

Louis. The Cardinal !—balance !—We'll consider.—
Eh, Count ?

Bar. Yes, Sire ;—fall back.

First Sec. But——

Bar. Oh ! fall back, Sir.

Joseph. Humph !

Second Sec. The affairs of England, Sire, most urgent
Charles

The First has lost a battle that decides
One half his realm,—craves moneys, Sire, and succour.

Louis. He shall have both.—Eh, Baradas ?

Bar. Yes, Sire.

(Oh that despatch !—my veins are fire !)

Rich. [feebly, but with great distinctness]. My liege—
Forgive me—Charles's cause is lost ! A man,
Named Cromwell, risen,—a great man !—your succour
Would fail—your loans be squander'd !—Pause—reflect.*

Louis. Reflect.—Eh, Baradas ?

Bar. Reflect, Sire.

Joseph. Humph !

Louis [aside]. I half repent !—No successor to Riche-
lieu !—

* See in "Cinq Mars," Vol. V., the striking and brilliant chapter from which the interlude of the Secretaries is borrowed.

Round me thrones totter !—dynasties dissolve !—
The soil he guards alone escapes the earthquake !

Joseph. Our star not yet eclipsed !—you mark the King?
Oh ! had we the despatch !

Rich. Ah ! Joseph !—Child—
Would I could help thee !

Enter Gentleman, whispers JOSEPH, who exit hastily.

Bar. [to Secretary]. Sir, fall back.

Second Sec. But——

Bar. Pshaw, Sir !

Third Sec. [mysteriously]. The secret correspondence,
Sire, most urgent,—

Accounts of spies—deserters—heretics—

Assassins—poisoners—schemes against yourself !——

Louis. Myself !—most urgent !—[looking on the documents.]

Re-enter JOSEPH with FRANÇOIS, whose pourpoint is streaked with blood. FRANÇOIS passes behind the Cardinal's Attendants, and, sheltered by them from the sight of BARADAS, &c., falls at RICHELIEU's feet.

Fran. O ! my Lord !

Rich. Thou art bleeding !

Fran. A scratch—I have not fail'd——

[Gives the packet.

Rich. Hush !——

[Looking at the contents.

Third Sec. [to King]. Sire, the Spaniards

Have reinforced their army on the frontiers.

The Duc de Bouillon——

Rich. Hold !—In this department——

A paper—here, Sire,—read yourself—then take

The Count's advice in 't.

Enter DE BERINGHEN hastily, and draws aside BARADAS.

[*RICHELIEU to Secretary, giving an open parchment.*

Bar. [*bursting from DE BERINGHEN*]. What ! and reft it from thee !

Ha !—hold !

Joseph. Fall back, son, it is your turn now !

Bar. Death !—the despatch !

Louis [*reading*]. To Bouillon—and sign'd Orleans !—
Baradas, too !—league with our foes of Spain !—
Lead our Italian armies—what ! to Paris !—
Capture the King—my health requires repose—
Make me subscribe my proper abdication—
Orleans, my brother, Regent !—Saints of Heaven !
These are the men I loved !

[*BARADAS draws,—attempts to rush out,—is arrested.—*
ORLEANS, endeavouring to escape more quickly, meets
JOSEPH'S eye and stops short. RICHELIEU falls back.

Joseph. See to the Cardinal !

Bar. He's dying ! and I yet shall dupe the King !

Louis [*rushing to RICHELIEU*]. Richelieu ! — Lord
Cardinal !—'tis I resign !—

Reign thou !

Joseph. Alas ! too late !—he faints !

Louis. Reign, Richelieu !

Rich. [*feebly*]. With absolute power ?—

Louis. Most absolute !—Oh ! live !

If not for me—for France !

Rich. FRANCE !

Louis. Oh ! this treason !—

The army — Orleans — Bouillon—Heavens !— the Spaniard !—

Where will they be next week ?—

Rich. [*starting up*].

There,—at my feet !

[*To First and Second Secretary.*

Ere the clock strike !—the Envoys have their answer !

[*To Third Secretary, with a ring.*

This to De Chavigny—he knows the rest—

No need of parchment here—he must not halt

For sleep—for food.—In *my* name,—MINE !—he will

Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head

Of his army !—Ho ! there, Count de Baradas,

Thou hast lost the stake !—Away with him ! *

[*As the Guards open the folding-doors, a view of the ante-room beyond, lined with Courtiers. BARADAS passes through the line.*

Ha !—ha !—

[*Snatching DE MAUPRAT'S death-warrant from the Officer.*

See here De Mauprat's death-writ, Julie !—

Parchment for battledores !—Embrace your husband !—

At last the old man blesses you !

Julie.

O joy !

You are saved ; you live—I hold you in these arms.

Mau. Never to part—

Julie.

No—never, Adrien—never !

Louis [*peevishly*]. One moment makes a startling cure,

Lord Cardinal.†

Rich. Ay, Sire, for in one moment there did pass

Into this wither'd frame the might of France !—

* The passion of the drama requires this catastrophe for Baradas. He however survived his disgrace; though stripped of all his rapidly-acquired fortunes ; and the daring that belonged to his character won him distinction in foreign service. He returned to France after Richelieu's death, but never regained the same court influence. He had taken the vows of a Knight of Malta, and Louis made him a Prior.

† The sudden resuscitation of Richelieu (not to strain too much

My own dear France—I have thee yet—I have saved thee!

I clasp thee still!—it was thy voice that call'd me
Back from the tomb!—What mistress like our country?

Louis. For Mauprat's pardon—well! But Julie,—
Richelieu,

Leave me one thing to love!—

Rich. A subject's luxury!

Yet, if you must love something, Sire,—*love me!*

Louis [*smiling in spite of himself*]. Fair proxy for a
young fresh Demoiselle!

Rich. Your heart speaks for my clients:—Kneel, my
children,

And thank your King,—

Julie. Ah, tears like these, my liege,

Are dews that mount to Heaven.

Louis. Rise—rise—be happy.

[RICHELIEU beckons to DE BERINGHEN.]

De Ber. [*falteringly*]. My lord—you are—most—
happily—recover'd.

Rich. But you are pale, dear Beringhen:—this air
Suits not your delicate frame—I long have thought so:—
Sleep not another night in Paris:—Go,—
Or else your precious life may be in danger.
Leave France, dear Beringhen!

on the real passion which supports him in this scene) is in conformance with the more dissimulating part of his character. The extraordinary mobility of his countenance (latterly so deathlike, save when the mind spoke in the features) always lent itself to stage effect of this nature. The queen-mother said of him, that she had seen him one moment so feeble, cast down, and “semi-mort,” that he seemed on the point of giving up the ghost—and the next moment he would start up full of animation, energy, and life.

De Ber.

I shall have time,
More than I ask'd for—to discuss the pâté.

[*Exit DE BERINGHEN.*

Rich. [to ORLEANS]. For you, repentance—absence—
and confession!

[*To FRANÇOIS.*

Never say *fail* again.—Brave boy!

[*To JOSEPH.*

He'll be—

A Bishop first.

Joseph. Ah, Cardinal—

Rich. Ah, Joseph!

[*To LOUIS—as DE MAUPRAT and JULIE converse apart.*

See, my liege—see thro' plots and counterplots—
Thro' gain and loss—thro' glory and disgrace—
Along the plains, where passionate Discord rears
Eternal Babel—still the holy stream
Of human happiness glides on!

Louis. And must we

Thank for *that* also—our prime Minister?

Rich. No—let us own it :—there is ONE above
Sways the harmonious mystery of the world,
Ev'n better than prime ministers ;—

Alas !

Our glories float between the earth and heaven
Like clouds which seem pavilions of the sun,
And are the playthings of the casual wind ;
Still, like the cloud which drops on unseen crags
The dews the wild flower feeds on, our ambition
May from its airy height drop gladness down
On unsuspected virtue ;—and the flower
May bless the cloud when it hath pass'd away ! *

* The image and the sentiment in the concluding lines are borrowed from a passage in one of the writings attributed to the Cardinal.

MONEY.

"Tis a very good world we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in ;
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
'Tis the very worst world that ever was known."

Old Truism.

"Und, es herrscht der Erde Gott, das Geld."—SCHILLER.

DEDICATED TO

JOHN FORSTER, ESQ.,

Author of "The Lives of Statesmen of the Commonwealth."

A SLIGHT MEMORIAL

OF SINCERE RESPECT AND CORDIAL FRIENDSHIP ;

ALTHOUGH

(FOR WE ARE ALL HUMAN!)

HE HAS, IN ONE INSTANCE, AND BUT ONE,

SUFFERED HIS JUDGMENT TO BE MISLED BY TOO GREAT A REGARD FOR

"MONEY!"

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD GLOSSMORE.

SIR JOHN VESEY, Bart., Knight of the Guelph,
F.R.S., F.S.A.

SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

STOUT.

GRAVES.

EVELYN.

CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH.

SHARP.

TOKE.

FRANTZ, *Tailor.*

'TABOURET, *Upholsterer.*

MACFINCH, *Jeweller and Silversmith.*

MACSTUCCO, *Architect.*

KITE, *Horse-dealer.*

CRIMSON, *Portrait-painter.*

GRAB, *Publisher.*

PATENT, *Coach-builder.*

*Members of the * * * Club, Servants, &c.*

LADY FRANKLIN, *half-sister to Sir John Vesey.*

GEORGINA, *daughter to Sir John.*

CLARA, *companion to Lady Franklin, cousin to Evelyn.*

Scene—London, 1840.

MONEY.



ACT I.—SCENE I.

A drawing-room in SIR JOHN VESEY'S house ; folding-doors at the back, which open on another drawing-room. To the right a table, with newspapers, books, &c. ; to the left, a sofa writing-table.

SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

Sir John [*reading a letter edged with black*]. Yes, he says at two precisely. "Dear Sir John, as since the death of my sainted Maria,"—Hum!—that's his wife ; she made him a martyr, and now he makes her a saint !

Geor. Well, as since her death ?—

Sir John [*reading*]. "I have been living in chambers, where I cannot so well invite ladies, you will allow me to bring Mr. Sharp, the lawyer, to read the will of the late Mr. Mordaunt (to which I am appointed executor) at your house—your daughter being the nearest relation. I shall be with you at two precisely.—Henry Graves."

Geor. And you really feel sure that poor Mr. Mordaunt has made me his heiress ?

Sir John. Ay, the richest heiress in England. Can you doubt it ? Are you not his nearest relation ? Niece

by your poor mother, his own sister. All the time he was making this enormous fortune in India, did we ever miss sending him little reminiscences of our disinterested affection? When he was last in England, and you only so high, was not my house his home? Didn't I get a surfeit out of complaisance to his execrable curries and pillaws? Didn't he smoke his hookah—nasty old—that is, poor dear man—in my best drawing-room? And didn't you make a point of calling him your “handsome uncle”?—for the excellent creature was as vain as a peacock,—

Geor. And so ugly!—

Sir John. The dear deceased! Alas, he *was*, indeed;—like a kangaroo in a jaundice! And *if*, after all these marks of attachment, you are *not* his heiress, why then the finest feelings of our nature—the ties of blood—the principles of justice—are implanted in us in vain.

Geor. Beautiful, sir. Was not that in your last speech at the Freemasons' Tavern upon the great Chimney-sweep Question?

Sir John. Clever girl!—what a memory she has! Sit down, Georgy. Upon this most happy—I mean melancholy—occasion, I feel that I may trust you with a secret. You see this fine house—our fine servants—our fine plate—our fine dinners: every one thinks Sir John Vesey a rich man.

Geor. And are you not, papa?

Sir John. Not a bit of it—all humbug, child—all humbug, upon my soul! As you hazard a minnow to hook in a trout, so one guinea thrown out with address is often the best bait for a hundred. There are two rules in life—FIRST, Men are valued not for what they *are*,

but what they *seem* to be. *SECONDLY*, If you have no merit or money of your own, you must trade on the merits and money of other people. My father got the title by services in the army, and died penniless. On the strength of his services I got a pension of £400 a year ; on the strength of £400 a year I took credit for £800 ; on the strength of £800 a year I married your mother with £10,000 ; on the strength of £10,000 I took credit for £40,000 and paid Dicky Gossip three guineas a week to go about everywhere calling me "Stingy Jack!"

Geor. Ha ! ha ! A disagreeable nickname.

Sir John. But a valuable reputation. When a man is called stingy, it is as much as calling him rich ; and when a man's called rich, why he's a man universally respected. On the strength of my respectability I wheedled a constituency, changed my politics, resigned my seat to a minister, who, to a man of such stake in the country, could offer nothing less in return than a patent office of £2,000 a year. That's the way to succeed in life. Humbug, my dear !—all humbug, upon my soul.

Geor. I must say that you——

Sir John. Know the world, to be sure. Now, for your fortune,—as I spend more than my income, I can have nothing to leave you ; yet, even without counting your uncle, you have always passed for an heiress on the credit of your expectations from the savings of "Stingy Jack." The same with your education. I never grudged anything to make a show—never stuffed your head with histories and homilies ; but you draw, you sing, you dance. you walk well into a room ; and that's the way young ladies are educated nowadays, in order to become a pride to their parents, and a blessing to their husband—that is,

when they have caught him. Apropos of a husband : you know we thought of Sir Frederick Blount.

Geor. Ah, papa, he is charming.

Sir John. He *was* so, my dear, before we knew your poor uncle was dead ; but an heiress such as you will be should look out for a duke.—Where the deuce is Evelyn this morning ?

Geor. I've not seen him, papa. What a strange character he is !—so sarcastic ; and yet he can be agreeable.

Sir John. A humorist—a cynic ? one never knows how to take him. My private secretary,—a poor cousin, has not got a shilling, and yet, hang me, if he does not keep us all at a sort of a distance.

Geor. But why do you take him to live with us, papa, since there's no good to be got by it ?

Sir John. There you are wrong ; he has a great deal of talent : prepares my speeches, writes my pamphlets, looks up my calculations. My Report on the last Commission has got me a great deal of fame, and has put me at the head of the new one. Besides he is our cousin—he has no salary : kindness to a poor relation always tells well in the world ; and Benevolence is a useful virtue,—particularly when you can have it for nothing ! With our other cousin, Clara, it was different : her father thought fit to leave me her guardian, though she had not a penny—a mere useless encumbrance : so, you see, I got my half-sister, Lady Franklin, to take her off my hands.

Geor. How much longer is Lady Franklin's visit to be ?

Sir John. I don't know, my dear ; the longer the better,—for her husband left her a good deal of money at her own disposal. Ah, here she comes !

SCENE II.

LADY FRANKLIN, CLARA, SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

Sir John. My dear sister, we were just loud in your praises. But how's this?—not in mourning?

Lady Fran. Why should I go into mourning for a man I never saw?

Sir John. Still, there may be a legacy.

Lady Fran. Then there'll be less cause for affliction! Ha! ha! my dear Sir John, I'm one of those who think feelings a kind of property, and never take credit for them upon false pretences.

Sir John [*aside*]. Very silly woman! But, Clara, I see you are more attentive to the proper decorum: yet you are very, *very*, VERY distantly connected with the deceased—a third cousin, I think?

Clara. Mr. Mordaunt once assisted my father, and these poor robes are all the gratitude I can show him.

Sir John. Gratitude! humph! I am afraid the minx has got expectations.

Lady Frank. So, Mr. Graves is the executor—the will is addressed to him? The same Mr. Graves who is always in black—always lamenting his ill-fortune and his sainted Maria, who led him the life of a dog?

Sir John. The very same. His liveries are black—his carriage is black—he always rides a black galloway—and, faith, if he ever marry again, I think he will show his respect to the sainted Maria by marrying a black woman.

Lady Fran. Ha ! ha ! we shall see.—[*Aside.*] Poor Graves, I always liked him : he made an excellent husband.

Enter EVELYN [*sits himself, and takes up a book unobserved*].

Sir John. What a crowd of relations this Will brings to light ! Mr. Stout, the Political Economist—Lord Glossmore—

Lady Fran. Whose grandfather kept a pawnbroker's shop, and who, accordingly, entertains the profoundest contempt for everything popular, *parvenu*, and plebeian.

Sir John. Sir Frederick Blount—

Lady Fran. Sir Fwedewick Blount, who objects to the letter R as being too *wough*, and therefore *dwops* its acquaintance : one of the new class of prudent young gentlemen, who, not having spirits and constitution for the hearty excesses of their predecessors, intrench themselves in the dignity of a lady-like languor. A man of fashion in the last century was riotous and thoughtless—in this he is tranquil and egotistical. He never does anything that is silly, or says anything that is wise. I beg your pardon, my dear ; I believe Sir Frederick is an admirer of yours, provided, on reflection, he does not see “what harm it could do him” to fall in love with your beauty and expectations. Then, too, our poor cousin the scholar—Oh, Mr. Evelyn, there you are !

Sir John. Evelyn—the very person I wanted : where have you been all day ? Have you seen to those papers ?—have you written my epitaph on poor Mordaunt ?—Latin, you know ?—have you reported my speech at Exeter Hall ?—have you looked out the debates on the

Customs ?—and, oh, have you mended up all the old pens in the study ?

Geor. And have you brought me the black floss silk ?—have you been to Storr's for my ring ?—and, as we cannot go out on this melancholy occasion, did you call at Hookham's for the last HB. and the Comic Annual ?

Lady Fran. And did you see what was really the matter with my bay horse ?—did you get me the Opera-box ?—did you buy my little Charley his peg-top ?

Eve. [*always reading*]. Certainly, Paley is right upon that point ; for, put the syllogism thus—[*looking up*] Ma'am—Sir—Miss Vesey—you want something of me ?——Paley observes, that to assist even the undeserving tends to the better regulation of our charitable feelings—No apologies—I am quite at your service.

Sir John. Now he's in one of his humours !

Lady Fran. You allow him strange liberties, Sir John.

Eve. You will be the less surprised at that, madam, when I inform you that Sir John allows me nothing else.—I am now about to draw on his benevolence.

Lady Fran. I beg your pardon, sir, and like your spirit. Sir John, I'm in the way, I see ; for I know your benevolence is so delicate that you never allow any one to detect it !

[*Walks aside.*]

Eve. I could not do your commissions to-day—I have been to visit a poor woman, who was my nurse and my mother's last friend. She is very poor, *very*—sick—dying—and she owes six months' rent !

Sir John. You know I should be most happy to do anything for yourself. But the nurse—[*Aside.* Some people's nurses are always ill !]—there are so many impostors about !—We'll talk of it to-morrow. This

most mournful occasion takes up all my attention. [*Looking at his watch.*] Bless me ! so late ! I've letters to write, and—none of the pens are mended ! [*Exit.*]

Geor. [*taking out her purse*]. I think I will give it to him—and yet, if I don't get the fortune, after all !—Papa allows me so little !—then I *must* have those earrings [*puts up the purse*]. Mr. Evelyn, what is the address of your nurse ?

Eve. [*writes and gives it*]. She has a good heart with all her foibles !—Ah ! Miss Vesey, if that poor woman had not closed the eyes of my lost mother, Alfred Evelyn would not have been this beggar to your father.

[CLARA looks over the address.]

Geor. I will certainly attend to it—[*aside*] if I get the fortune.

Sir John [*calling without*]. Georgy, I say !

Geor. Yes, papa.

[*Exit.*]

[EVELYN has seated himself again at the table (to the right), and leans his face on his hands.]

Clara. His noble spirit bowed to this !—Ah, at least here I may give him comfort—[*sits down to write*]. But he will recognize my hand.

Lady Frank. What bill are you paying, Clara ?—putting up a bank-note ?

Clara. Hush !—O Lady Franklin, you are the kindest of human beings. This is for a poor person—I would not have her know whence it came, or she would refuse it. Would you ?—No,—he knows *her* handwriting also !

Lady Frank. Will I—what ?—give the money myself ? with pleasure ! Poor Clara—Why this covers all your savings—and I am so rich !

Clara. Nay, I would wish to do all myself !—it is a

pride—a duty—it is a joy; and I have so few joys!
But, hush!—this way.

[They retire into the inner room and converse in dumb show.]

Eve. And thus must I grind out my life for ever!—I am ambitious, and Poverty drags me down; I have learning, and Poverty makes me the drudge of fools!—I love, and Poverty stands like a spectre before the altar! But no, no—if, as I believe, I am but loved again, I will—will—what?—turn opium-eater, and dream of the Eden I may never enter.

Lady Frank. *[to CLARA].* Yes, I will get my maid to copy and direct this—she writes well, and *her* hand will never be discovered. I will have it done and sent instantly. *[Exit.]*

[CLARA advances to the front of the stage, and seats herself—
EVELYN reading.—Enter SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.]



SCENE III.

CLARA, EVELYN, SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

Blount. No one in the woom!—Oh, Miss Douglas!—Pway don't let me disturb you. Where is Miss Vesey—Georgina? *[Taking CLARA'S chair as she rises.]*

Eve. *[looking up, gives CLARA a chair and re-seats himself].* *[Aside.]* Insolent puppy!

Clara. Shall I tell her you are here, Sir Frederick?

Blount. Not for the world. Vewy pwetty girl *this* companion!

Clara. What did you think of the Panorama the other day, Cousin Evelyn?

Eve. [*reading*].—

“I cannot talk with civet in the room,

A fine puss gentleman that's all perfume!”

Rather good lines these.

Blount. Sir!

Eve. [*offering the book*]. Don't you think so?—Cowper.

Blount [*declining the book*]. Cowper!

Eve. Cowper.

Blount [*shrugging his shoulders, to CLARA*]. Stwange person, Mr. Evelyn!—quite a chawacter!—Indeed the Panowama gives you no idea of Naples—a delightful place. I make it a wule to go there ewevy second year—I am vewy fond of twavelling. You'd like Wome (Rome)—bad inns, but vewy fine wuins; gives you quite a taste for that sort of thing!

Eve. [*reading*].—

“How much a dunce that has been sent to roam

Excels a dunce that has been kept at home!”

Blount [*aside*]. That fellow Cowper says vewy odd things!—Humph!—it is beneath me to quawwell.—
[*Aloud.*] It will not take long to wead the will, I suppose. Poor old Mordaunt!—I am his nearest male welation. He was vewy eccentwic. By the way, Miss Douglas, did you wemark my cuwicle? It is bwinging cuwicles into fashion. I should be most happy if you will allow me to dwive you out. Nay—nay—I should, upon my word. [*Trying to take her hand.*]

Eve. [*starting up*]. A wasp!—a wasp!—just going to settle. Take care of the wasp, Miss Douglas!

Blount. A wasp!—where!—don't bwing it this way,

—some people don't mind them ! I've a particular dislike to wasps ; they sting damnably !

Eve. I beg pardon—it's only a gadfly.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Sir John will be happy to see you in his study, Sir Frederick. [*Exit* Servant.]

Blount. Vewy well. Upon my word, there is something vewy nice about this girl. To be sure, I love Georgina—but if this one would take a fancy to me [*thoughtfully*—Well, I don't see what harm it could do me !—*Au plaisir !* [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

EVELYN and CLARA.

Eve. Clara !

Clara. Cousin !

Eve. And you too are a dependent !

Clara. But on Lady Franklin, who seeks to make me forget it.

Eve. Ay, but can the world forget it ? This insolent condescension—this coxcombry of admiration—more galling than the arrogance of contempt ! Look you now—Robe Beauty in silk and cashmere—hand Virtue into her chariot—lackey their caprices—wrap them from the winds—fence them round with a golden circle—and Virtue and Beauty are as goddesses both to peasant and to prince.

Strip them of the adjuncts—see Beauty and Virtue poor—dependent—solitary—walking the world defenceless ! oh, *then* the devotion changes its character—the same crowd gather eagerly around—fools—fops—libertines—not to worship at the shrine, but to sacrifice the victim !

Clara. My cousin, you are cruel !

Eve. Forgive me ! There is a something when a man's heart is better than his fortunes, that makes even affection bitter. Mortification for myself—it has ceased to chafe me. I can mock where I once resented. But *you*—*YOU*, so delicately framed and nurtured—one slight to you—one careless look—one disdainful tone—makes me feel the true curse of the poor man. His pride gives armour to *his own* breast, but it has no shield to protect another.

Clara. But I, too, have pride of my own—I, too, can smile at the pointless insolence——

Eve. Smile—and he took your hand ! Oh, Clara, you know not the tortures that I suffer hourly ! When others approach you—*young—fair—rich*—the sleek darlings of the world—I accuse you of your very beauty—I writhe beneath every smile that you bestow. No—speak not !—my heart has broken its silence, and you shall hear the rest. For you I have endured the weary bondage of this house—the fool's gibe—the hireling's sneer—the bread purchased by toils that should have led me to loftier ends : yes, to see you—hear you—breathe the same air—be ever at hand—that if others slighted, from one at least you might receive the luxury of respect :—for this—for this I have lingered, suffered, and forborne. Oh ! Clara, we are orphans both—friendless both : you are all in the world to me : turn not away—my very soul speaks in these words—I LOVE YOU !

Clara. No—Evelyn—Alfred—No! say it not; think it not! it were madness.

Eve. Madness!—nay, hear me yet. I am poor, penniless—a beggar for bread to a dying servant. True!—But I have a heart of iron! I have knowledge—patience—health,—and my love for you gives me at last ambition! I have trifled with my own energies till now, for I despised all things till I loved you. With you to toil for—your step to support—your path to smooth—and I—I poor Alfred Evelyn—promise at last to win for you even fame and fortune! Do not withdraw your hand—*this* hand—shall it not be mine?

Clara. Ah, Evelyn! Never—never!

Eve. Never.

Clara. Forget this folly; our union is impossible, and to talk of love were to deceive both!

Eve. [*bitterly*]. Because I am poor!

Clara. And *I* too! A marriage of privation—of penury—of days that dread the morrow! I have seen such a lot! Never return to this again.

Eve. Enough—you are obeyed. I deceived myself—ha!—ha!—I fancied that *I* too was loved. I, whose youth is already half gone with care and toil!—whose mind is soured—whom nobody *can* love—who ought to have loved no one!

Clara [*aside*]. And if it were only *I* to suffer, or perhaps to starve?—Oh, what shall I say? [*Aloud.*] Evelyn—Cousin?

Eve. Madam.

Clara. Alfred—I—I—

Eve. Reject me!

Clara. Yes! It is past!

[*Exit.*

Eve. Let me think. It was yesterday her hand trembled when mine touched it. And the rose I gave her—yes, she pressed her lips to it once when she seemed as if she saw me not. But it was a trap—a trick—for I was as poor then as now. This will be a jest for them all! Well, courage! it is but a poor heart that a coquet's contempt can break! And now, that I care for no one, the world is but a great chess-board, and I will sit down in earnest and play with Fortune!

Enter LORD GLOSSMORE, *preceded by* Servant.

Ser. I will tell Sir John, my Lord!

[EVELYN *takes up the newspaper.*]

Gloss. The secretary—hum! Fine day, sir; any news from the East?

Eve. Yes!—all the wise men have gone back there!

Gloss. Ha, ha!—not all, for here comes Mr. Stout, the great political economist.



SCENE V.

STOUT, GLOSSMORE, EVELYN.

Stout. Good morning, Glossmore.

Gloss. *Glossmore!*—the parvenu!

Stout. Afraid I might be late—been detained at the Vestry—Astonishing how ignorant the English poor are! Took me an hour and a half to beat it into the head of a stupid old widow, with nine children, that to allow her

three shillings a week was against all the rules of public morality !

Eve. Excellent !—admirable !—your hand, sir !

Gloss. What ! you approve such doctrines, Mr. Evelyn ? Are old women only fit to be starved ?

Eve. Starved ! popular delusion ! Observe, my Lord—to squander money upon those who starve is only to afford encouragement to starvation !

Stout. A very superior person that !

Gloss. Atrocious principles ! Give me the good old times, when it was the duty of the rich to succour the distressed.

Eve. On second thoughts, *you* are right, my Lord. I, too, know a poor womann—ill—dying—in want. Shall *she*, too, perish ?

Gloss. Perish ! horrible !—in a Christian country ! Perish ! Heaven forbid !

Eve. [*holding out his hand*]. What, then, will you give her ?

Gloss. Ehem ! Sir—the parish ought to give.

Stout. No !—no !—no ! Certainly not ! [*with great vehemence*].

Gloss. No ! no ! But I say, yes ! yes ! And if the parish refuse to maintain the poor, the only way left to a man of firmness and resolution, holding the principles that I do, and adhering to the constitution of our fathers, is to force the poor *on* the parish by never giving them a farthing one's self

SCENE VI.

SIR JOHN, BLOUNT, LADY FRANKLIN, GEORGINA,
GLOSSMORE, STOUT, EVELYN.

Sir John. How d'ye do?—Ah! How d'ye do, gentlemen? This is a most melancholy meeting! The poor deceased! what a man he was!

Blount. I was thwistened Fwedewick after him! He was my first cousin.

Sir John. And Georgina his own niece—next of kin!—an excellent man, though odd—a kind heart, but no liver! I sent him twice a year thirty dozen of the Cheltenham waters. It's a comfort to reflect on these little attentions at such a time.

Stout. And I, too, sent him the Parliamentary debates regularly, bound in calf. He was my second cousin—sensible man—and a follower of Malthus: never married to increase the surplus population, and fritter away his money on his own children. And now——

Eve. He reaps the benefit of celibacy in the prospective gratitude of every cousin he had in the world!

Lady Frank. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir John. Hush! hush! decency, Lady Franklin; decency!

Enter Servant.

Ser. Mr. Graves—Mr. Sharp.

Sir John. Oh, here's Mr. Graves; that's Sharp the lawyer, who brought the will from Calcutta.

SCENE VII.

GRAVES, SHARP, SIR JOHN, &c.

Chorus of SIR JOHN, GLOSSMORE, BLOUNT, STOUT.

Ah, sir—Ah, Mr. Graves!

[GEORGINA *holds her handkerchief to her eyes.**Sir John.* A sad occasion!*Graves.* But everything in life is sad. Be comforted, Miss Vesey. True, you have lost an uncle; but I—I have lost a wife—such a wife!—the first of her sex—and the second cousin of the defunct! Excuse me, Sir John; at the sight of your mourning my wounds bleed afresh. [Servants *hand round wine and sandwiches.**Sir John.* Take some refreshment—a glass of wine.*Graves.* Thank you!—(very fine sherry!)—Ah! my poor sainted Maria! Sherry was *her* wine: everything reminds me of Maria! Ah, Lady Franklin! *you* knew her. Nothing in life can charm me now.—[*Aside.*] A monstrous fine woman that!*Sir John.* And now to business. Evelyn, you may retire.*Sharp* [looking at his notes]. Evelyn—any relation to Alfred Evelyn?*Eve.* The same.*Sharp.* Cousin to the deceased, seven times removed. Be seated, sir; there may be some legacy, though trifling: all the relations, however distant, should be present.

Lady Fran. Then Clara is related—I will go for her.

[*Exit.*]

Geor. Ah, Mr. Evelyn; I hope you will come in for something—a few hundreds, or even more.

Sir John. Silence! Hush! Wugh! ugh! Attention!

[*While the Lawyer opens the will, re-enter LADY FRANKLIN and CLARA.*]

Sharp. The will is very short—being all personal property. He was a man that always came to the point.

Sir John. I wish there were more like him!—[*Groans and shakes his head.*]

[*Chorus groan and shake their heads.*]

Sharp [*reading*]. “I, Frederick James Mordaunt, of Calcutta, being at the present date of sound mind, though infirm body, do hereby give, will and bequeath—Inprimis, To my second cousin, Benjamin Stout, Esq., of Pall Mall, London—— [*Chorus exhibit lively emotion.* Being the value of the Parliamentary Debates with which he has been pleased to trouble me for some time past—deducting the carriage thereof, which he always forgot to pay—the sum of £14. 2s. 4d.

[*Chorus breathe more freely.*]

Stout. Eh, what?—£14? Oh, hang the old miser!

Sir John. Decency—decency! Proceed, sir.

Sharp. “Item.—To Sir Frederick Blount, Baronet, my nearest male relative——”

[*Chorus exhibit lively emotion.*]

Blount. Poor old boy!

[*GEORGINA puts her arm over BLOUNT's chair.*]

Sharp. “Being, as I am informed, the best-dressed young gentleman in London, and in testimony to the

only merit I ever heard he possessed, the sum of £500 to buy a dressing-case."

[*Chorus breathe more freely; GEORGINA catches her father's eye, and removes her arm.*]

Blount [*laughing confusedly*]. Ha! ha! ha! Vewy poor wit—low!—vewy—vewy low!

Sir John. Silence, now, will you?

Sharp. "Item.—To Charles Lord Glossmore—who asserts that he is my relation—my collection of dried butterflies, and the pedigree of the Mordaunts from the reign of King John." [Chorus as before.]

Gloss. Butterflies!—Pedigree!—I disown the plebeian!

Sir John [*angrily*]. Upon my word, this is too revolting! Decency! Go on.

Sharp. "Item.—To Sir John Vesey, Baronet, Knight of the Guelph, F.R.S., F.S.A., &c." [Chorus as before.]

Sir John. Hush! Now it is really interesting!

Sharp. "Who married my sister, and who sends me every year the Cheltenham waters, which nearly gave me my death, I bequeath—the empty bottles."

Sir John. Why, the ungrateful, rascally, old——

Chorus. Decency, Sir John—decency.

Sharp. "Item.—To Henry Graves, Esq., of the Albany——" [Chorus as before.]

Graves. Pooh! gentlemen—my usual luck—not even a ring, I dare swear!

Sharp. "The sum of £5,000 in the Three per Cents."

Lady Fran. I wish you joy!

Graves. Joy—pooh! Three per Cents!—Funds sure to go! Had it been *land*, now—though only an acre!—just like my luck.

Sharp. "Item.—To my niece Georgina Vesey——"

[*Chorus as before.*]

Sir John. Ah, now it comes !

Sharp. "The sum of £10,000 India Stock, being, with her father's reputed savings, as much as a single woman ought to possess."

Sir John. And what the devil, then, does the old fool do with all his money ?

Chorus. Really, Sir John, this is too revolting. Decency ! Hush !

Sharp. "And, with the aforesaid legacies and exceptions, I do will and bequeath the whole of my fortune, in India Stock, Bonds, Exchequer Bills, Three per Cent. Consols, and in the Bank of Calcutta, (constituting him hereby sole residuary legatee and joint executor with the aforesaid Henry Graves, Esq.) to Alfred Evelyn, now, or formerly of Trinity College, Cambridge—

[*Universal excitement.*]

Being, I am told, an oddity, like myself—the only one of my relations who never fawned on me ; and, who having known privation, may the better employ wealth."—And now, Sir, I have only to wish you joy, and give you this letter from the deceased—I believe it is important.

Eve. [*crossing over to CLARA*]. Ah, Clara, if you had but loved me !

Clara [*turning away*]. And his wealth, even more than poverty, separates us for ever !

[*Omnes crowd round to congratulate EVELYN.*]

Sir John [*to GEORGINA*]. Go, child—put a good face on it—he's an immense match ! My dear fellow, I wish you joy : you are a great man now—a very great man !

Eve. [*aside*]. And *her* voice alone is silent !

Lord Gloss. If I can be of any use to you——

Stout. Or I, sir——

Blount. Or I ! Shall I put you up at the clubs ?

Sharp. You will want a man of business. I transacted all Mr. Mordaunt's affairs.

Sir John. Tush, tush ! Mr. Evelyn is at home *here*—— always looked on him as a son ! Nothing in the world we would not do for him ! Nothing !

Eve. Lend me £10 for my old nurse !

[*Chorus put their hands into their pockets.*]



ACT II.—SCENE I.

An anteroom in EVELYN'S new house ; at one corner, behind a large screen, MR. SHARP writing at a desk, books and parchments before him.—MR. CRIMSON, the portrait-painter ; MR. GRAB, the publisher ; MR. MACSTUCCO, the architect ; MR. TABOUBET, the upholsterer ; MR. MACFINCH, the silversmith ; MR. PATENT, the coachmaker ; MR. KITE, the horse-dealer ; and MR. FRANTZ, the tailor.—(Servants cross to and fro the stage.)

Patent [*to FRANTZ, showing a drawing*]. Yes, sir ; this is the Evelyn vis-à-vis ! No one more the fashion than Mr. Evelyn. Money makes the man, sir.

Frantz. But de tailor, de schneider, make de gentleman ! It is Mr. Frantz, of St. James's, who take his measure and his cloth, and who make de fine handsome noblemen and gentry, where de faders and de mutters make only de ugly little naked boys !

Macstuc. He's a mon o' teeste, Mr. Evelyn. He taulks o' buying a veela (villa), just to pool down and build oop again.—Ah, Mr. Macfinch! a design for a piece of pleete, eh?

Macfinch [*showing the drawing*]. Yees, sir; the shield o' Alexander the Great, to hold ices and lemonade! It will coost two thousand poon'!

Macstuc. And it's dirt cheap—ye're Scotch, arn't ye?

Macfinch. Aberdounshire! — scraitch me, and I'll scraitch you!

[*Door at the back thrown open.—Enter EVELYN.*]

Eve. A levee, as usual. Good day. Ah, Tabouret, your designs for the draperies; very well. And what do you want, Mr. Crimson?

Crim. Sir, if you'd let me take your portrait, it would make my fortune. Every one says you're the finest judge of paintings.

Eve. Of paintings! paintings! Are you sure I'm a judge of paintings?

Crim. Oh, sir, didn't you buy the great Correggio for 4,000.

Eve. True—I see. So £4,000 makes me an excellent judge of paintings. I'll call on you, Mr. Crimson,—good day. Mr. Grab—oh, you're the publisher who once refused me £5 for a poem? You are right, it was a sad doggerel.

Grab. Doggerel! Mr. Evelyn, it was sublime! But times were bad then.

Eve. Very bad times with me.

Grab. But now, sir, if you will give me the preference, I'll push it, sir,—I'll push it! I only publish for poets

in high life, sir ; and a gentleman of your station ought to be pushed !—£500 for the poem, sir !

Eve. £500 when I don't want it, where £5 once would have seemed a fortune.

“ Now I am rich, what value in the lines !

How the wit brightens—how the sense refines ! ”

[*Turns to the rest who surround him.*

Kite. Thirty young horses from Yorkshire, sir !

Patent [*showing drawing*]. The Evelyn vis-à-vis !

Macfinch [*showing drawing*]. The Evelyn salver !

Frantz [*opening his bundle, and with dignity*]. Sare, I have brought de coat—de great Evelyn coat.

Eve. Oh, go to—that is, go home ! Make me as celebrated for vis-à-vis, salvers, furniture, and coats, as I already am for painting, and shortly shall be for poetry. I resign myself to you—go !

[*Exeunt* MACFINCH, PATENT, &c.

Enter STOUT.

Eve. Stout, you look heated !

Stout. I hear you have just bought the great Grogin-hole property.

Eve. It is true. Sharp says it's a bargain.

Stout. Well, my dear friend Hopkins, member for Grogin-hole, can't live another month—but the interests of mankind forbid regret for individuals ! The patriot Popkins intends to start for the borough the instant Hopkins is dead !—your interest will secure his election !—now is your time ! put yourself forward in the march of enlightenment !—By all that is bigoted, here comes Glossmore !

SCENE II.

STOUT, GLOSSMORE, EVELYN ; SHARP *still at his desk.*

Gloss. So lucky to find you at home ! Hopkins, of Groginhole, is not long for this world. Popkins, the brewer, is already canvassing underhand (so very ungentlemanlike !). Keep your interest for young Lord Cipher—a most valuable candidate. This is an awful moment—the CONSTITUTION depends on his return ! Vote for Cipher.

Stout. Popkins is your man !

Eve. [*musingly*]. Cipher and Popkins—Popkins and Cipher ! Enlightenment and Popkins—Cipher and the Constitution ! I AM puzzled ! Stout, I am not known at Groginhole.

Stout. Your *property's* known there !

Eve. But purity of election—independence of votes——

Stout. To be sure : Cipher bribes *abominably*. Frustrate his schemes—preserve the liberties of the borough—turn every man out of his house who votes against enlightenment and Popkins !

Eve. Right !—down with those who take the liberty to admire any liberty except *our* liberty ! That *is* liberty !

Gloss. Cipher has a stake in the country—will have £50,000 a year—Cipher will never give a vote without considering beforehand how people of £50,000 a year will be affected by the motion.

Eve. Right : for as without law there would be no pro-

perty, so to be the law for property is the only proper property of law!—That is law!

Stout. Popkins is all for economy—there's a sad waste of the public money—they give the Speaker £5,000 a year, when I've a brother-in-law who takes the chair at the vestry, and who assures me confidentially he'd consent to be speaker for half the money?

Gloss. Enough, Mr. Stout.—Mr. Evelyn has too much at stake for a leveller.

Stout. And too much sense for a bigot.

Eve. Mr. Evelyn has no politics at all!—Did you ever play at *battledore*?

Both. Battledore?

Eve. Battledore!—that is a contest between two parties: both parties knock about something with singular skill—something is kept up—high—low—here—there—everywhere—nowhere! How grave are the players! how anxious the bystanders! how noisy the battledores! But when this something falls to the ground, only fancy—it's nothing but cork and feather! Go, and play by yourselves—I'm no hand at it!

Stout [*aside*]. Sad ignorance!—Aristocrat!

Gloss. Heartless principles!—Parvenu!

Stout. Then you don't go *against* us?—I'll bring Popkins to-morrow.

Gloss. Keep yourself free till I present Cipher to you.

Stout. I must go to inquire after Hopkins. The return of Popkins will be an era in history. [*Exit.*]

Gloss. I must be off to the club—the eyes of the country are upon Groginhole. If Cipher fail, the constitution is gone! [*Exit.*]

Eve. Both sides alike! Money *versus* Man!—Sharp,

come here—let me look at you ! You are my agent, my lawyer, my man of business. I believe you honest ;—but what is honesty ?—where does it exist ?—in what part of us ?

Sharp. In the heart, I suppose, sir.

Eve. Mr. Sharp, it exists in the breeches-pocket ! Observe : I lay this piece of yellow earth on the table—I contemplate you both ; the man there—the gold here ! Now, there is many a man in those streets honest as you are, who moves, thinks, feels and reasons as well as we do ; excellent in form—imperishable in soul ; who, if his pockets were three days empty, would sell thought, reason, body, and soul too, for that little coin ! Is that the fault of the man ?—no ! it is the fault of mankind ? God made man ; behold what mankind have made a god ! When I was poor, I hated the world ; now I am rich, I despise it ! Fools—knaves—hypocrites !——By the bye, Sharp, send £100 to the poor bricklayer whose house was burned down yesterday——

Enter GRAVES.

Ah, Graves, my dear friend ! what a world this is !—a cur of a world, that fawns on its master, and bites the beggar ! Ha ! ha ! it fawns on *me* now, for the beggar has bought the cur.

Graves. It is an atrocious world !—But astronomers say that there is a travelling comet which must set it on fire one day,—and that's some comfort !

Eve. Every hour brings its gloomy lesson—the temper sours—the affections wither—the heart hardens into stone ! Zounds, Sharp ! what do you stand gaping there for ?—have you no bowels ?—why don't you go and see to the bricklayer ?

[*Exit SHARP.*

SCENE III.

GRAVES *and* EVELYN.

Eve. Graves, of all my new friends—and their name is Legion—you are the only one I esteem ; there is sympathy between us—we take the same views of life. I am cordially glad to see you !

Graves [*groaning*]. Ah ! why should you be glad to see a man so miserable ?

Eve. Because I am miserable myself.

Graves. You ! Pshaw ! *you* have not been condemned to lose a wife !

Eve. But, plague on it, man, I may be condemned to take one !—Sit down, and listen. I want a confidant !—Left fatherless, when yet a boy, my poor mother grudged herself food to give me education. Some one had told her that learning was better than house and land—that's a lie, Graves.

Graves. A scandalous lie, Evelyn !

Eve. On the strength of that lie I was put to school—sent to college, a sizar. Do you know what a sizar is ? In pride he is a gentleman—in knowledge he is a scholar—and he crawls about, amidst gentlemen and scholars, with the livery of a pauper on his back ! I carried off the great prizes—I became distinguished—I looked to a high degree, leading to a fellowship ; that is, an independence for myself—a home for my mother. One day a young lord insulted me—I retorted—he struck me—refused apology

—refused redress. I was a sizar !—a Pariah !—a thing to be struck ! Sir, I was at least a man, and I horsewhipped him in the hall before the eyes of the whole College ! A few days, and the lord's chastisement was forgotten. The next day the sizar was expelled—the career of a life blasted ! That is the difference between Rich and Poor : it takes a whirlwind to move the one—a breath may uproot the other ! I came to London. As long as my mother lived, I had one to toil for ; and I did toil—did hope—did struggle to be something yet. She died, and then, somehow, my spirit broke—I resigned myself to my fate ; the Alps above me seemed too high to ascend—I ceased to care what became of me. At last I submitted to be the poor relation—the hanger-on and gentleman-lackey of Sir John Vesey. But I had an object in that—there was one in that house whom I had loved at the first sight.

Graves. And were you loved again ?

Eve. I fancied it, and was deceived. Not an hour before I inherited this mighty wealth I confessed my love and was rejected because I was poor. Now, mark : you remember the letter which Sharp gave me when the will was read ?

Graves. Perfectly ; what were the contents ?

Eve. After hints, cautions, and admonitions—half in irony, half in earnest (Ah, poor Mordaunt had known the world !), it proceeded—but I'll read it to you :—“ Having selected you as my heir, because I think money a trust to be placed where it seems likely to be best employed, I now—not impose a condition, but ask a favour. If you have formed no other and insuperable attachment, I could wish to suggest your choice : my two nearest female relations are my niece Georgina, and my third cousin, Clara

Douglas, the daughter of a once dear friend. If you could see in either of these one whom you could make your wife, such would be a marriage that, if I live long enough to return to England, I would seek to bring about before I die." My friend, this is not a legal condition—the fortune does not *rest* on it ; yet, need I say that my gratitude considers it a moral obligation ? Several months have elapsed since thus called upon—I ought now to decide : you hear the names—Clara Douglas is the woman who rejected me !

Graves. But now she would accept you !

Eve. And do you think I am so base a slave to passion, that I would owe to my gold what was denied to my affection ?

Graves. But you must choose one, in common gratitude ; you *ought* to do so—yes, there you are right. Besides, you are constantly at the house—the world observes it : you must have raised hopes in one of the girls. Yes ; it is time to decide between her whom you love and her whom you do not !

Eve. Of the two, then, I would rather marry where I should exact the least. A marriage, to which each can bring sober esteem and calm regard, may not be happiness, but it may be content. But to marry one whom you could adore, and whose heart is closed to you—to yearn for the treasure, and only to claim the casket—to worship the statue that you never may warm to life—Oh ! such a marriage would be a hell, the more terrible because Paradise was in sight.

Graves. Georgina is pretty, but vain and frivolous.—*[Aside.]* But he has no right to be fastidious—he has never known Maria !—*[Aloud.]* Yes, my dear friend,

now I think on it, you *will* be as wretched as myself!—When you are married, we will mingle our groans together!

Eve. You may misjudge Georgina; she may have a nobler nature than appears on the surface. On the day, but before the hour, in which the will was read, a letter, in a strange or disguised hand, signed "*From an unknown friend to Alfred Evelyn,*" and enclosing what to a girl would have been a considerable sum, was sent to a poor woman for whom I had implored charity, and whose address I had only given to Georgina.

Graves. Why not assure yourself?

Eve. Because I have not dared. For sometimes, against my reason, I have hoped that it might be Clara! [*taking a letter from his bosom and looking at it*]. No, I can't recognize the hand. Graves, I detest that girl.

Graves. Who? Georgina?

Eve. No; Clara! But I've already, thank Heaven! taken some revenge upon her. Come nearer.—[*Whispers.*] I've bribed Sharp to say that Mordaunt's letter to me contained a codicil leaving Clara Douglas £20,000.

Graves. And didn't it? How odd, then, not to have mentioned her in his will!

Eve. One of his caprices: besides, Sir John wrote him word that Lady Franklyn had adopted her. But I'm glad of it—I've paid the money—she's no more a dependent. No one can insult her now—she owes it all to me, and does not guess it, man—does not guess it!—owes it to me, —me, whom she rejected;—me, the poor scholar!—Ha! ha!—there's some spite in that, eh?

Graves. You're a fine fellow, Evelyn, and we understand each other. Perhaps Clara may have seen the address, and dictated this letter after all!

Eve. Do you think so?—I'll go to the house this instant!

Graves. Eh? Humph! Then I'll go with you. That Lady Franklin is a fine woman! If she were not so gay, I think—I could——

Eve. No, no; don't think any such thing; women are even worse than men.

Graves. True; to love is a boy's madness!

Eve. To feel is to suffer.

Graves. To hope is to be deceived.

Eve. I have done with romance!

Graves. Mine is buried with Maria!

Eve. If Clara did but write this——

Graves. Make haste, or Lady Franklin will be out!—
A vale of tears!—a vale of tears!

Eve. A vale of tears, indeed! [Exeunt

Re-enter GRAVES for his hat.

Graves. And I left my hat behind me! Just like my luck! If I had been bred a hatter, little boys would have come into the world without heads.* [Exit.

SCENE IV.

Drawing-rooms at SIR JOHN VESEY'S, as in Act I., Scene I.

LADY FRANKLIN, CLARA, Servant.

Lady Frank. Past two, and I have so many places to go to! Tell Philipps I want the carriage directly—instantly.

* For this melancholy jest Mr. Graves is indebted to a poor Italian poet.

Ser. I beg pardon, my Lady ; Philipps told me to say the young horse had fallen lame, and could not be used to-day. [Exit.

Lady Frank. Well, on second thoughts, that is lucky ; now I have an excuse for not making a great many tedious visits. I must borrow Sir John's horses for the ball to-night. Oh, Clara, you must see my new turban from Carson's—the prettiest thing in the world, and so becoming !

Clara. Ah, Lady Franklin, you'll be so sorry—but—but——

Lady Frank. But what ?

Clara. Such a misfortune ! poor Smith is in tears—I promised to break it to you. Your little Charley had been writing his copy, and spilt the ink on the table ; and Smith not seeing it—and taking out the turban to put in the pearls as you desired—she—she——

Lady Frank. Ha ! ha ! laid it on the table, and the ink spoilt it. Ha ! ha !—how well I can fancy the face she made ! Seriously, on the whole it is fortunate ; for I think I look best, after all, in the black hat and feathers.

Clara. Dear Lady Franklin, you really have the sweetest temper !

Lady Frank. I hope so—for it's the most becoming turban a woman can wear ! Think of that when you marry. Oh, talking of marriage, I've certainly made a conquest of Mr. Graves.

Clara. Mr. Graves ! I thought he was inconsolable.

Lady Frank. For his sainted Maria ! Poor man ! not contented with plaguing him while she lived, she must needs haunt him now she is dead.

Clara. But why does he regret her ?

Lady Frank. Why? Because he has everything to make him happy—easy fortune, good health, respectable character. And since it is his delight to be miserable, he takes the only excuse the world will allow him. For the rest—it's the way with widowers; that is, whenever they mean to marry again. But, my dear Clara, you seem absent—pale—unhappy—tears, too?

Clara. No—no—not tears. No!

Lady Frank. Ever since Mr. Mordaunt left you £20,000 everyone admires you. Sir Frederick is desperately smitten.

Clara [*with disdain*]. Sir Frederick!

Lady Frank. Ah! Clara, be comforted—I know your secret: I am certain that Evelyn loves you.

Clara. He did—it is past now. He misconceived me when he was poor; and now he is rich, it is not for me to explain.

Lady Frank. My dear child, happiness is too rare to be sacrificed to a scruple. Why does he come here so often?

Clara. Perhaps for Georgina!

Enter SIR JOHN, and turns over the books, &c., on the table, as if to look for the newspaper.

Lady Frank. Pooh! Georgina is my niece; she is handsome and accomplished—but her father's worldliness has spoilt her nature—she is not worthy of Evelyn! Behind the humour of his irony there is something noble—something that may yet be great. For his sake as well as yours, let me at least——

Clara. Recommend me to his pity? Ah, Lady Franklin! if he addressed me from dictation, I should again refuse him. No; if he cannot read my heart—if he will not seek to read it, let it break unknown.

Lady Frank. You mistake me, my dear child : let me only tell him that you dictated that letter—that you sent that money to his old nurse. Poor Clara ! it was your little all. He will then know, at least, if avarice be your sin.

Clara. He would have guessed it had *his* love have been like *mine*.

Lady Frank. Guessed it !—nonsense ! The handwriting unknown to him—every reason to think it came from Georgina.

Sir John [aside]. Hum ! Came from Georgina !

Lady Frank. Come, *let* me tell him *this*. I know the effect it would have upon his choice.

Clara. Choice ! oh, that humiliating word ! No, Lady Franklin, no ! Promise me !

Lady Frank. But——

Clara. No ! Promise—faithfully—sacredly.

Lady Frank. Well, I promise.

Clara. You know how fearful is my character—no infant is more timid : if a poor spider cross the floor, you often laugh to see me grow pale and tremble ; and yet I would lay this hand upon the block—I would walk bare-foot over the ploughshare of the old ordeal—to save Alfred Evelyn one moment's pain. But I have refused to share his poverty, and I should die with shame if he thought I had now grown enamoured of his wealth. My kind friend, you will keep your promise ?

Lady Frank. Yes, since it must be so.

Clara. Thanks. I—I—forgive me—I am not well.

[*Exit.*

Lady Frank. What fools these girls are !—they take as much pains to lose a husband as a poor widow does to get one !

Sir John. Have you seen "The Times" newspaper? Where the deuce is the newspaper? I can't find "The Times" newspaper.

Lady Frank. I think it is in my room. Shall I fetch it?

Sir John. My dear sister—you're the best creature. Do!

[*Exit* LADY FRANKLIN.]

Ugh! you unnatural conspirator against your own family! What can this *letter* be? Ah! I recollect something.

Enter GEORGINA.

Geor. Papa, I want——

Sir John. Yes, I know what you want well enough! Tell me—were you aware that Clara had sent money to that old nurse Evelyn bored us about the day of the will?

Geor. No! He gave me the address, and I promised, if——

Sir John. Gave you the address?—that's lucky! Hush!

Enter Servant.

Mr. Graves—Mr. Evelyn.



SCENE V.

GRAVES, EVELYN, SIR JOHN, GEORGINA, LADY FRANKLIN.

Lady Frank. [*returning*]. Here is the newspaper.

Graves. Ay—read the newspapers!—they'll tell you what this world is made of. Daily calendars of roguery

and woe ! Here, advertisements from quacks, money-lenders, cheap warehouses, and spotted boys with two heads. So much for dupes and impostors ! Turn to the other column—police reports, bankruptcies, swindling, forgery, and a biographical sketch of the snub-nosed man who murdered his own three little cherubs at Pentonville. Do you fancy these but exceptions to the *general* virtue and health of the nation ?—Turn to the leading articles ; and your hair will stand on end at the horrible wickedness or melancholy idiotism of that half the population who think differently from yourself. In my day I have seen already eighteen crises, six annihilations of Agriculture and Commerce, four overthrows of the Church, and three last, final, awful, and irremediable destructions of the entire Constitution. And that's a newspaper !

Lady Frank. Ha ! ha ! your usual vein ! always so amusing and good-humoured !

Graves [*frowning and very angry*]. Ma'am—good-humoured !——

Lady Frank. Ah ! you should always wear that agreeable smile ; you look so much younger—so much handsomer—when you smile !

Graves [*softened*]. Ma'am——A charming creature, upon my word !

Lady Frank. You have not seen the last H.B. ? It is excellent. I think it might make you *laugh*. But, by the bye, I don't think you can laugh.

Graves. Ma'am—I have not laughed since the death of my sainted Ma——

Lady Frank. Ah ! and that spiteful Sir Frederick says you never laugh, because——But you'll be angry ?

Graves. Angry !—pooh ! I despise Sir Frederick too

much to let anything he says have the smallest influence over me ! He says I don't laugh, because——

Lady Frank. You have lost your front teeth !

Graves. Lost my front teeth ! Upon my word ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! That's too good — capital ! Ha ! ha ! ha !
[*laughing from ear to ear*].

Lady Frank. Ha ! ha ! ha !

[*They retire to the table in the inner drawing-room.*]

Eve [*aside*]. Of course Clara will not appear !—avoids me as usual ! But what do I care ?—what is she to me ? Nothing ! I'll swear this is her glove !—no one else has so small a hand. She'll miss it—so—so— ! Nobody's looking—I'll keep it, just to vex her.

Sir John [*to GEORGINA*]. Yes—yes—leave me to manage : you took his portrait, as I told you ?

Geor. Yes—but I could not catch the expression. I got Clara to touch it up.

Sir John. That girl's always in the way !

Enter CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH.

Smooth. Good morning, dear John. Ah, Miss Vesey, you have no idea of the conquests you made at Almack's last night !

Eve. [*examining him curiously while SMOOTH is talking to GEORGINA.*] And that's the celebrated Dudley Smooth !

Sir John. More commonly called Deadly Smooth !—the finest player at whist, écarté, billiards, chess, and picquet, between this and the Pyramids—the sweetest manners !—always calls you by your Christian name. But take care how you play at cards with him !

Eve. He does not cheat, I suppose ?

Sir John. Hist ! No !—but he always wins ! Eats

up a brace of lords and a score or two of guardsmen every season, and runs through a man's fortune like a course of the Carlsbad waters. He's an uncommonly clever fellow !

Eve. Clever ? yes ! When a man steals a loaf we cry down the knavery—when a man diverts his neighbour's mill-stream to grind his own corn, we cry up the cleverness !—And every one courts Captain Dudley Smooth !

Sir John. Why, who could offend him ?—the best-bred, civillest creature—and a dead shot ! There is not a cleverer man in the three kingdoms.

Eve. A study—a study !—let me examine him ! Such men are living satires on the world.

Smooth [*passing his arm caressingly over SIR JOHN'S shoulder*]. My dear John, how well you are looking ! A new lease of life ! Introduce me to Mr. Evelyn.

Eve. Sir, it's an honour I've long ardently desired.

[*They bow and shake hands.*]

Enter SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

Blount. How d'ye do, Sir John ? Ah, Evelyn—I wished so much to see you.

Eve. 'Tis my misfortune to be visible !

Blount. A little this way. You know, perhaps, that I once paid my addresses to Miss Vesey ; but since that vewy eccentwic will Sir John has shuffled me off, and hints at a pwior attachment—[*aside*] which I know to be false.

Eve. [*seeing CLARA*]. A prior attachment !—(Ha ! Clara !) Well, another time, my dear Blount.

Enter CLARA.

Blount. Stay a moment—I want you to do me a favour with regard to Miss Douglas.

Eve. Miss Douglas !

Blount. Yes ;—you see, though Georgina has gweat expectations, and Stingy Jack will leave her all that he has, yet she has only her legacy of £10,000 at the moment—no doubt closely settled on herself too : Clara has £20,000. And, I think, Clara always liked me a little.

Eve. You ! I dare say she did !

Blount. It is whispered about that you mean to pwopose to Georgina. Nay, Sir John more than hinted that was her pwior attachment !

Eve. Indeed !

Blount. Now, as you are all in all with the family, if you could say a word for me to Miss Douglas, I don't see what harm it could do me !—[*Aside.*] I will punish Georgina for her pwerfidy.

Eve. 'Sdeath, man ! speak for yourself ! you are just the sort of man for young ladies to like—they understand you—you're of their own level. Pshaw ! you're too modest—you want no mediator !

Blount. My dear fellow, you flatter me. I'm well enough in my way. But you, you know, would cawwy ewewything before you !—you're so confoundedly wick !

Eve. [*turning to CLARA.*] Miss Douglas, what do you think of Sir Frederick Blount ? Observe him. He is well dressed—young—tolerably handsome—(BLOUNT *bowing*) bows with an air—has plenty of small-talk—every thing to captivate. Yet he thinks that, if he and I were suitors to the same lady, I should be more successful because I am richer.—What say you ! Is love an auction ?—and *do* women's hearts go to the highest bidder ?

Clara. Their hearts ?—No.

Eve. But their hands—yes! You turn away. Ah, you dare not answer that question!

Geor. [*aside*]. Sir Frederick flirting with Clara? I'll punish him for his perfidy. You are the last person to talk so, Mr. Evelyn!—you, whose wealth is your smallest attraction—~~you~~, whom every one admires—so witty, such taste, such talent! Ah, I'm very foolish!

Sir John [*clapping him on the shoulder*]. You must not turn my little girl's head. Oh, you're a sad fellow! Apropos, I must show you Georgina's last drawings. She has wonderfully improved since you gave her lessons in perspective.

Geor. No, papa!—No, pray, no! Nay, don't!

Sir John. Nonsense, child!—it's very odd, but she's more afraid of you than of any one!

Smooth [*to BLOUNT taking snuff*]. He's an excellent father, our dear John! and supplies the place of a mother to her. [*Turns away to LADY FRANKLIN and GRAVES.*

[*EVELYN and GEORGINA seat themselves, and look over the drawings; SIR JOHN leans over them; SIR FREDERICK converses with CLARA; EVELYN watching them.*

Eve. Beautiful!—a view from Tivoli. (Death!—she looks down while he speaks to her!) Is there a little fault in that colouring? (She positively blushes!) But this Jupiter is superb. (What a d——d coxcomb it is!) [*Rising.*] Oh, she certainly loves him—I too can be loved elsewhere—I too can see smiles and blushes on the face of another.

Geor. Are you not well?

Eve. I beg pardon. Yes, you are indeed improved! Ah, who so accomplished as Miss Vesey?

[*Takes up the drawings; pays her marked attention in dumb show.*

Clara. Yes, Sir Frederick, the concert was very crowded. Ah, I see that Georgina consoles him for the past! He has only praises for her, nothing but taunts for me!

Blount. I wish you would take my opewa-box next Saturday—'tis the best in the house. I'm not wick, but I spend what I have on myself! I make a point to have evewything the best in a quiet way. Best opewa-box—best dogs—best horses—best house of its kind. I want nothing to complete my establishment but the best wife!

Clara [*abstractedly*]. That will come in good time, Sir Frederick.

Eve. Oh, it will come—will it? Georgina refused the trifter—*she* courts him [*taking up a portrait*]. Why, what is this?—my own——

Geor. You must not look at that—you must not, indeed. I did not know it was there.

Sir John. Your own portrait, Evelyn! Why, child, I was not aware you took likenesses:—that's something new. Upon my word it's a strong resemblance.

Geor. Oh, no—it does not do him justice. Give it to me. I will tear it. [*Aside.*] That odious Sir Frederick!

Eve. Nay, you shall not.

Clara. So—so—he loves her, then! Misery—misery! But he shall not perceive it! No—no—I can be proud too. Ha! ha!—Sir Frederick—excellent—excellent—you are so entertaining—ha! ha! [*laughs hysterically*].

Eve. Oh, the affectation of coquets—they cannot even laugh naturally!

[CLARA looks at him reproachfully, and walks aside with
SIR FREDERICK.]

But where is the new guitar you meant to buy, Miss Vesey—the one inlaid with tortoiseshell? It is nearly a

year since you set your heart on it, and I don't see it yet !

Sir John [*taking him aside confidentially*]. The guitar—oh, to tell you a secret—she applied the money I gave her for it to a case of charity several months ago—the very day the will was read. I saw the letter lying on the table, with the money in it. Mind, not a word to her—she'd never forgive me !

Eve. Letter !—money ! What was the name of the person she relieved ?—not Stanton ?

Sir John. I don't remember, indeed.

Eve. [*taking out the letter*]. This is not her hand !

Sir John. No ! I observed at the time it was not her hand, but I got out from her that she did not wish the thing to *be known*, and had employed some one else to copy it. May I see the letter ? Yes, I think this is the wording. But I did not mean to tell you what case of charity it was. I promised Georgy I would not. Still, how did she know Mrs. Stanton's address ?—you never gave it to me !

Eve. I gave it to her, Sir John.

Clara [*at the distance*]. Yes, I'll go to the opera, if Lady Franklin will. Do go, dear Lady Franklin !—on Saturday, then, Sir Frederick. [*Exit* BLOUNT.

Eve. Sir John, to a man like me, this simple act of unostentatious generosity is worth all the accomplishments in the world. A good heart—a tender disposition—a charity that shuns the day—a modesty that blushes at its own excellence—an impulse towards something more divine than Mammon ;—such are the true accomplishments which preserve beauty for ever young. Such I have sought in the partner I would take for life ;—such have I found—alas ! not where I had dreamed !—Miss

Vesey, I will be honest—I say then, frankly—[*as CLARA approaches, raising his voice and looking fixedly at her*—I have loved another—deeply—truly—bitterly—*vainly* ! I cannot offer to you, as I did to her, the fair first love of the human heart—rich with all its blossoms and its verdure. But if esteem—if gratitude—if an earnest resolve to conquer every recollection that would wander from your image ;—if these can tempt you to accept my hand and fortune, my life shall be a study to deserve your confidence.

[CLARA stands motionless, clasping her hands, and then slowly seats herself.

Sir John. The happiest day of my life !

[CLARA falls back in her chair.

Eve. [*darting forward*]. [*Aside.*] She is pale ; she faints ! What have I done ? Oh heaven !—Clara !

Clara [*rising with a smile*]. Be happy, my cousin—be happy ! Yes, with my whole heart I say it—be happy, Alfred Evelyn !



ACT III.—SCENE I.

The drawing-rooms in SIR JOHN VESEY'S house.

SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

Sir John. And he has not pressed you to fix the wedding-day ?

Geor. No ; and since he proposed he comes here so seldom, and seems so gloomy. Heigho ! Poor Sir Frederick was twenty times more amusing.

Sir John. But Evelyn is fifty times as rich !

Geor. Sir Frederick dresses so well !

Sir John. You'll have magnificent diamonds ; but a word with you : I saw you yesterday in the square with Sir Frederick ; that must not happen again. When a young lady is engaged to one man, nothing is so indecorous as to flirt with another. It might endanger your marriage itself. Oh, it's highly indecorous !

Geor. Don't be afraid, papa,—he takes up with Clara.

Sir John. Who, Evelyn ?

Geor. Sir Frederick. Heigho !—I hate artful girls.

Sir John. The settlements will be splendid ! if anything happens, nothing can be handsomer than your jointure.

Geor. My own kind papa, you always put things so pleasantly. But do you not fear lest he discover that Clara wrote the letter ?

Sir John. No ; and I shall get Clara out of the house. But there is something else that makes me very uneasy. You know that no sooner did Evelyn come into possession of his fortune than he launched out in the style of a prince. His house in London is a palace, and he has bought a great estate in the country. Look how he lives !—Balls—banquets—finearts—fiddlers—charities—and the devil to pay !

Geor. But if he can afford it——

Sir John. Oh ! so long as he stopped *there* I had no apprehension ; but since he proposed for you he is more extravagant than ever. They say he has taken to gambling : and he is always with Captain Smooth. No fortune can stand Deadly Smooth ! If he gets into a scrape he may fall off from the settlements. We must press the marriage at once.

Geor. Heigho! Poor Frederick! You don't think he is *really* attached to Clara!

Sir John. Upon my word I can't say. Put on your bonnet, and come to Storr and Mortimer's to choose the jewels.

Geor. The jewels;—yes—the drive will do me good. So you'll send away Clara?—she's so very deceitful.

Sir John. Never fear—yes—tell her to come to me.

[*Exit* GEORGINA.]

Yes! I must press on this marriage; Georgina has not wit enough to manage him—at least till he's her husband, and then all women find it smooth sailing. This match will make me a man of prodigious importance! I suspect he'll give me up her ten thousand pounds. I can't think of his taking to gambling, for I love him as a son—and I look on his money as my own.

SCENE II.

CLARA and SIR JOHN.

Sir John. Clara, my love!

Clara. Sir——

Sir John. My dear, what I am going to say may appear a little rude and unkind, but you know my character is frankness.—To the point then; my poor child, I am aware of your attachment to Mr. Evelyn——

Clara. Sir! *my attachment?*

Sir John. It is generally remarked. Lady Kind says you are falling away. My poor girl, I pity you—I do,

indeed! Now, there's that letter you wrote to his old nurse—it has got about somehow—and the world is so ill-natured. I don't know if I did right; but after he had proposed to Georgy—(of course not before!)—I thought it so unpleasant for you, as a young lady, to be suspected of anything forward with respect to a man who was not attached to you, that I rather let it be supposed that Georgy *herself* wrote the letter.

Clara. Sir, I don't know what right you had to——

Sir John. That's very true, my dear: and I've been thinking since that I ought perhaps to tell Mr. Evelyn that the letter was yours—shall I?

Clara. No, sir; I beg you will not. I—I—[*weeps*].

Sir John. My dear Clara, don't cry; I would not have said this for the world, if I was not a little anxious about my own girl. Georgina is so unhappy at what every one says of your attachment——

Clara. Every one?—Oh, torture!

Sir John. That it preys on her spirits—it even irritates her temper! You see, though the marriage will take place almost immediately, Mr. Evelyn does not come so often as he ought. In a word, I fear these little jealousies and suspicions will tend to embitter their future union.—I'm a father—forgive me.

Clara. Embitter their union! Oh, never! What would you have me do, sir?

Sir John. Why, you're now independent. Lady Franklin seems resolved to stay in town. Surely she can't mean to take her money out of the family by some foolish inclination for Mr. Graves? He is always purring and whining about the house, like a black cat in the megrims, What think you, eh?

Clara. Sir, it was of myself—my unhappy self, you were speaking.

Sir John. Sly!—True; true! What I meant to say was this:—Lady Franklin persists in staying *here*: you are your own mistress. Mrs. Carlton, aunt to my late wife, is going abroad for a short time, and would be delighted if you would accompany her.

Clara. It is the very favour I would have asked of you. [*Aside.*] I shall escape at least the struggle and the shame. When does she go?

Sir John. In five days—next Monday.—You forgive me?

Clara. Sir, I thank you.

Sir John [*drawing the table*]. Suppose, then, you write a line to her yourself, and settle it at once?

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. The carriage, Sir John; Miss Vesey is quite ready.

Sir John. Wait a moment. SHALL I tell Evelyn you wrote the letter?

Clara. No, sir, I implore you.

Sir John. But it would be awkward for Georgy, if discovered.

Clara. It *never* shall be.

Sir John. Well, well, as you please. I know nothing could be so painful to a young lady of pride and delicacy. —James, if Mr. Serious, the clergyman, calls, say I'm gone to the great meeting at Exeter Hall: if Lord Spruce calls, say you believe I'm gone to the rehearsal of Cinderella. Oh! and if Mac Finch should come—(Mac Finch, who duns me three times a week)—say I've hurried off

to Garraway's to bid for the great Bulstrode estate. Just put the Duke of Lofty's card carelessly on the hall table. And I say, James, I expect two gentlemen a little before dinner—Mr. Squab the Radical, and Mr. Qualm of the great Marylebone Conservative Association. Show Squab into the study, and be sure to give him the "Weekly True Sun,"—Qualm into the back parlour, with the "Times" and the "Morning Post." One must have a little management in this world. All humbug!—all humbug, upon my soul ! *[Exit.]*

Clara [*folding the letter*]. There—it is decided ! A few days, and we are parted for ever !—a few weeks, and another will bear his name—his wife ! Oh, happy fate ! She will have the right to say to him—though the whole world should hear her—"I am thine !" And I embitter their lot—I am the cloud upon their joyous sunshine ! And yet, O Alfred ! if she loves thee—if she knows thee—if she values thee—and, when thou wrong'st her, if she can forgive, as I do—I can bless her when far away, and join her name in my prayer for thee !

Eve. [*without*]. Miss Vesey just gone ? Well, I will write a line.



SCENE III.

EVELYN and CLARA.

Eve. [*aside*]. So—Clara ! Do not let me disturb you, Miss Douglas.

Clara [*going*]. Nay, I have done.

Eve. I see that my presence is always odious to you, it is a reason why I come so seldom. But be cheered, madam : I am here but to fix the day of my marriage, and I shall then go into the country—till—till——In short, this is the last time my visit will banish you from the room I enter.

Clara [*aside*]. The last time !—and we shall then meet no more !—And to part thus for ever—in scorn—in anger—I cannot bear it ! [*Approaching him.*] Alfred, my cousin, it is true, this may be the last time we shall meet—I have made my arrangements to quit England.

Eve. To quit England ?

Clara. But before I go let me thank you for many a past kindness, which it is not for an orphan easily to forget.

Eve. [*mechanically*]. To quit England !

Clara. I have long wished it : but enough of me.—Evelyn, now that you are betrothed to another—now, without recurring to the past—now, without the fear of mutual error and mistake—something of our old friendship may at least return to us.—And if, too, I dared, I have that on my mind which only a friend—a sister—might presume to say to you.

Eve. [*moved*]. Miss Douglas—Clara—if there is ought that I could do—if, while hundreds—strangers—beggars tell me that I have the power, by opening or shutting this worthless hand, to bid sorrow rejoice, or poverty despair—if—if my life—my heart's blood—could render to *you* one such service as my gold can give to others—why, speak !—and the past you allude to—yes, even that bitter past—I will cancel and forget.

Clara [*holding out her hand*]. We are friends, then ! you are again my cousin ! my brother.

Eve. [*dropping her hand*]. Brother ! Ah ! say on !

Clara. I speak, then, as a sister — herself weak, inexperienced, ignorant, nothing — *might* speak to a brother, in whose career she felt the ambition of a man. Oh, Evelyn, when you inherited this vast wealth I pleased myself with imagining how you would wield the power delegated to your hands. I knew your benevolence — your intellect — your genius ! — the ardent mind couched beneath the cold sarcasm of a long-baffled spirit ! I saw before me the noble and bright career open to you at last — and I often thought that, in after-years, when far away — as I soon shall be — I should hear your name identified, not with what fortune can give the base, but with deeds and ends to which, for the *great*, fortune is but the instrument ; — I often thought that I should say to my own heart — weeping proud and delicious tears — “ And once this man loved me ! ”

Eve. No more, Clara ! — oh, Heavens ! — no more !

Clara. But *has* it been so ? — have you been true to your own self ? — Pomp — parade — luxuries — pleasures — follies ! — all these might distinguish others — they do but belie the ambition and the soul of Alfred Evelyn ! — Oh ! pardon me — I am too bold — I pain — I offend you. — Ah, I should not have dared thus much had I not thought at times, that — that —

Eve. That these follies — these vanities — this dalliance with a loftier fate were your own work ! You thought that, and you were right ! Perhaps, indeed, after a youth steeped to the lips in the hyssop and gall of penury — perhaps I might have wished royally to know the full value of that dazzling and starry life which, from the last step in the ladder, I had seen indignantly and from afar.

But a month—a week would have sufficed for that experience. Experience!—Oh, how soon we learn that hearts are as cold and souls as vile—no matter whether the sun shine on the noble in his palace, or the rain drench the rags of the beggar cowering at the porch. The extremes of life differ but in this:—Above, *Vice* smiles and revels—below, *Crime* frowns and starves. But you—did not you reject me because I was poor? Despise me if you please!—my revenge might be unworthy—I wished to show you the luxuries, the gaud, the splendour I thought you prized,—to surround with the attributes your sex seems most to value the station that, had you loved me, it would have been yours to command. But vain—vain alike my poverty and my wealth! You loved me not in either, and my fate is sealed?

Clara. A happy fate, Evelyn!—you love!

Eve. And at last I am beloved. [*After a pause, and turning to her abruptly.*] Do you doubt it?

Clara. No, I believe it firmly!—[*Aside.*] Were it possible for her not to love him?

Eve. Georgina, perhaps, is vain—and light—and——

Clara. No—think it not! Once removed from the worldly atmosphere of her father's counsels, and you will form and raise her to your own level. She is so young yet—she has beauty, cheerfulness, and temper;—the rest you will give, if you will but yet do justice to your own nature. And, now that there is nothing unkind between us—not even regret—and surely [*with a smile*] not revenge, my cousin, you will rise to your nobler self—and so, farewell!

Eve. No; stay, one moment;—you still feel interest in my fate! Have I been deceived? Oh, why—why did you spurn the heart whose offerings were lavished at

your feet ? Could you still—still—— ? Distraction—I know not what I say :—my honour pledged to another—my vows accepted and returned ! Go, Clara, it is best so ! Yet you will miss some one, perhaps, more than me—some one to whose follies you have been more indulgent—some one to whom you would permit a yet tenderer name than that of brother !

Clara [aside]. It will make him, perhaps, happier to think it ! Think so, if you will !—but part friends.

Eve. Friends—and that is all ! Look you, this is life ! The eyes that charmed away every sorrow—the hand whose lightest touch thrilled to the very core—the presence that, like moonlight, shed its own hallowing beauty over the meanest things ; a little while—a year—a month—a day, and we smile that we could dream so idly. All—all—the sweet enchantment, known but once, never to return again, vanished from the world ! And the one who forgets the soonest—the one who robs your earth for ever of its summer—comes to you with a careless lip, and says—“ Let us part friends ! ”——Go, Clara,—go,—and be happy if you can !

Clara [weeping]. Cruel — cruel — to the last ! —— Heaven forgive you, Alfred ! *[Exit.*

Eve. Soft ! let me recall her words, her tones, her looks.—*Does she love me ?* She defends her rival—she did not deny it when I charged her with attachment to another ; and yet—and yet—there is a voice at my heart—which tells me I have been the rash slave of a jealous anger.——But I have made my choice—I must abide the issue !

Enter GRAVES, preceded by Servant.

Ser. Lady Franklin is dressing, sir.

SCENE IV.

GRAVES *and* EVELYN.

Graves. Well, I'll wait. [*Exit Servant.*] She was worthy to have known the lost Maria! So considerate to ask me hither—not to console me, *that* is impossible—but to indulge the luxury of woe. It will be a mournful scene.—[*Seeing EVELYN.*—Is that you, Evelyn?—I have just heard that the borough of Groginhole is vacant at last. Why not stand yourself?—with your property you might come in without even a personal canvass.

Eve. I, who despise these contests for the colour of a straw—this everlasting litigation of Authority *versus* Man—I to be one of the wranglers?—never!

Graves. You are quite right, and I beg your pardon.

Eve. [*Aside.*] And yet Clara spoke of ambition. She would regret me if I could be distinguished.—[*Aloud.*] To be sure, after all, Graves, corrupt as mankind are, it is our duty to try at least to make them a little better. An Englishman owes something to his country.

Graves. He does, indeed! [*counting on his fingers.*] East winds, Fogs, Rheumatism, Pulmonary Complaints, and Taxes—[*EVELYN walks about in disorder.*] You seem agitated—a quarrel with your intended? Oh! when you've been married a month, you'll not know what to do without one!

Eve. You are a pleasant comforter.

Graves. Do you deserve a comforter? One morning

you tell me you love Clara, or at least detest her, which is the same thing (poor Maria often said she detested *me*)—and that very afternoon you propose to Georgina!

Eve. Clara will easily console herself—thanks to Sir Frederick!

Graves. He is young!

Eve. Good looking!

Graves. A coxcomb!

Eve. And therefore irresistible!

Graves. Nevertheless, Clara has had the bad taste to refuse him. I have it from Lady Franklin, to whom he confided his despair in re-arranging his neck-cloth!

Eve. My dear friend—is it possible?

Graves. But what then? You *must* marry Georgina, who, to believe Lady Franklin, is sincerely attached to—your fortune. Go and hang yourself, Evelyn; you have been duped by them.

Eve. By them—bah! If deceived, I have been my own dupe. Is it not a strange thing that in matters of reason—of the arithmetic and logic of life—we are sensible, shrewd, prudent men; but touch our hearts—move our passions—take us for an instant from the hard safety of worldly calculation—and the philosopher is duller than the fool? *Duped*—if I thought it!—

Graves. To be sure!—you tried Clara in your *poverty*; it was a safe experiment to try Georgina in your *wealth*.

Eve. Ha! that is true—very true. Go on.

Graves. You'll have an excellent father-in-law. Sir John positively weeps when he talks of your income!

Eve. Sir John, possibly—but Georgina?

Graves. Plays affection to you in the afternoon, after practising first with Sir Frederick in the morning.

Eve. On your life, sir, be serious : what do you mean ?

Graves. That in passing this way I see her very often walking in the square with Sir Frederick.

Eve. Ha ! say you so ?

Graves. What then ? Mán is born to be deceived. You look nervous—your hand trembles ; that comes of gaming. They say at the clubs that you play deeply.

Eve. Ha ! ha ! Do they say that ?—a few hundreds lost or won—a cheap opiate—anything that can lay the memory to sleep. The poor man drinks, and the rich man gambles—the same motive to both ! But you are right—it is a base resource—I will play no more.

Graves. I am delighted to hear it, for your friend Captain Smooth has ruined half the young heirs in London. To play with him is to advertise yourself a bankrupt. Even Sir John is alarmed. I met him just now in Pall Mall ; he made me stop, and implored me to speak to you. By the by, I forgot—do you bank with Flash, Brisk, Credit, and Co. ?

Eve. So, Sir John is alarmed ?—[*Aside.*] Gulled by this coggng charlatan ?—Aha ! I may beat him yet at his own weapons !—Humph ! Bank with Flash ! Why do you ask me ?

Graves. Because Sir John has just heard that they are in a very bad way, and begs you to withdraw anything you have in their hands.

Eve. I'll see to it. So Sir John is *alarmed* at my gambling ?

Graves. Terribly ! He even told me he should go himself to the club this evening, to watch you.

Eve. To watch me !—good—I will be there.

Graves. But you will promise not to play ?

Eve. Yes—to play. I feel it is impossible to give it up!

Graves. No—no! 'Sdeath, man! be as wretched as you please; break your heart, that's nothing! but damme, take care of your pockets.

Eve. I will be there—I will play with Captain Smooth—I will lose as much as I please—thousands—millions—billions; and if he presume to spy on my losses, hang me if I don't lose Sir John himself into the bargain! [*Going out and returning.*] I am so absent! What was the bank you mentioned? Flash, Brisk, and Credit? Bless me, how unlucky! and it's too late to draw out to-day. Tell Sir John I'm very much obliged to him, and he'll find me at the club any time before day-break, hard at work with my friend Smooth! [*Exit.*]

Graves. He's certainly crazy! but I don't wonder at it. What the approach of the dog-days is to the canine species, the approach of the honeymoon is to the human race.

Enter Servant.

Ser. Lady Franklin's compliments—she will see you in the *boudoir*, sir.

Graves. In the *boudoir*!—go, go—I'll come directly.

[*Exit Servant.*]

My heart beats—it must be for grief. Poor Maria! [*Searching his pockets for his handkerchief.*] Not a white one!—just like my luck: I call on a lady to talk of the dear departed, and I've nothing about me but a cursed gaudy, flaunting, red, yellow, and blue abomination from India, which it's even indecent for a disconsolate widower to exhibit. Ah! Fortune never ceases to torment the susceptible. The *boudoir*!—ha! ha! the *boudoir*! [*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

A Boudoir in the same house.

Lady Frank. I take so much compassion on this poor man, who is determined to make himself wretched, that I am equally determined to make him happy! Well, if my scheme does but succeed, he shall laugh, he shall sing, he shall——Mum!—here he comes!

Enter GRAVES.

Graves [*sighing*]. Ah, Lady Franklin!

Lady Frank. [*sighing*]. Ah, Mr. Graves! [*They seat themselves.*] Pray excuse me for having kept you so long. Is it not a charming day?

Graves. An east wind, ma'am! but nothing comes amiss to you!—'tis a happy disposition! Poor Maria! *she*, too, was naturally gay.

Lady Frank. Yes, she was gay. So much life, and a great deal of spirit.

Graves. Spirit? Yes!—nothing could master it. She *would* have her own way! Ah! there was nobody like her!

Lady Frank. And then, when her spirit was up, she looked so handsome! Her eyes grew so brilliant!

Graves. Did not they?—Ah! ah! ha! ha! ha! And do you remember her pretty trick of stamping her foot?—the tiniest little foot—I think I see her now. Ah! this conversation is very soothing!

Lady Frank. How well she acted in your private theatricals!

Graves. You remember her Mrs. Oakley, in "The Jealous Wife?" Ha! ha! how good it was!—ha! ha!

Lady Frank. Ha! ha! Yes, in the very first scene, when she came out with [*mimicking*] "Your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me!"

Graves. No—no! that's not it! more energy. [*Mimicking.*] "Your unkindness and barbarity will be the DEATH of me." Ha! ha! I ought to know how she said it, for she used to practise it on me twice a-day. Ah! poor dear lamb! [*Wipes his eyes.*]

Lady Frank. And then she sang so well! was such a composer! What was that little French air she was so fond of?

Graves. Ha! ha! sprightly? was it not? Let me see—let me see.

Lady Frank. [*humming*]. Tum ti—ti tum—ti—ti—ti. No, that's not it.

Graves [*humming*]. Tum ti—ti—tum ti—ti—tum—tum—tum.

Both. Tum ti—ti—tum ti—ti—tum—tum—tum. Ha! ha!

Graves [*throwing himself back*]. Ah! what recollections it revives! It is too affecting.

Lady Frank. It is affecting; but we are all mortal. [*Sighs.*] And at your Christmas party at Cyprus Lodge, do you remember her dancing the Scotch reel with Captain Macnaughten?

Graves. Ha! ha! ha! To be sure—to be sure.

Lady Frank. Can you think of the step?—somehow thus, was it not? [*Dancing.*]

Graves. No—no—quite wrong!—just stand there.

Now then [*humming the tune*].—La—la-la-la.—La la, &c.
[*They dance.*]

That's it—excellent—admirable !

Lady Frank. [*aside.*] Now 'tis coming.

Enter SIR JOHN, BLOUNT, GEORGINA,—*they stand amazed.*

[*LADY FRANKLIN continues to dance.*]

Graves. Bewitching—irresistible ! 'Tis Maria herself that I see before me ! Thus—thus—let me clasp—Oh, the devil ! Just like my luck !—[*Stopping opposite* SIR JOHN]. [*LADY FRANKLIN runs off.*]

Sir John. Upon *my* word, Mr. Graves !

Geor., Blount. Encore—encore ! Bravo—bravo !

Graves. It's all a mistake ! I—I—Sir John. Lady Franklin, you see—that is to say—I——Sainted Maria ! you are spared, at least, this affliction !

Geor. Pray go on !

Blount. Don't let us interwupt you.

Graves. Interrupt me ! I must say that this rudeness—this gross impropriety—to pry into the sorrows of a poor bereaved sufferer, seeking comfort from a sympathising friend—But such is human nature !

Geor. But, Mr. Graves !—[*following him*].

Graves. Heartless !

Blount. My dear Mr. Graves !—[*following him*].

Graves. Frivolous !

Sir John. Stay and dine !—[*following him*].

Graves. Unfeeling !

Omnes. Ha !——ha !——ha !

Graves. Monsters ! Good day to you.*

[*Exit, followed by* SIR JOHN, &c.

* For the original idea of this scene the author is indebted to a little proverb, never, he believes, acted in public.

SCENE VI.

*The interior of * * * * 's Club ; night ; lights, &c. Small sofa-tables, with books, papers, tea, coffee, &c. Several Members grouped by the fireplace ; one Member with his legs over the back of his chair ; another with his legs over his table ; a third with his legs on the chimney-piece. To the left, and in front of the Stage, an old Member reading the newspaper, seated by a small round table ; to the right a card-table, before which CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH is seated, and sipping lemonade ; at the bottom of the Stage another card-table.*

GLOSSMORE and STOUT.

Gloss. You don't come often to the club, Stout ?

Stout. No ; time is money. An hour spent at a club is unproductive capital.

Old Mem. [*reading the newspaper*]. Waiter !—the snuff-box. [*Waiter brings it.*]

Gloss. So, Evelyn has taken to play ? I see Deadly Smooth, “hushed in grim repose, awaits his evening prey.” Deep work to-night, I suspect, for Smooth is drinking lemonade—keeps his head clear—monstrous clever dog !

Enter EVELYN ; salutes and shakes hands with different members in passing up the Stage.

How d'ye do, Glossmore ? How are you, Stout ? *you* don't play, I think ? Political Economy never plays at cards, eh ?—never has time for anything more frivolous than Rents and Profits, Wages and Labour, High Prices, and Low—Corn-Laws, Poor-Laws, Tithes, Currency—Dot-and-go-one — Rates, Puzzles, Taxes, Riddles, and

Botheration ! Smooth is the man. Aha ! Smooth. Piquet, eh ? You owe me my revenge !

[Members touch each other significantly ; STOUT walks away with the snuff-box ; Old Member looks at him savagely.]

Smooth. My dear Alfred, anything to oblige.

[They seat themselves.]

Old Mem. Waiter !—the snuff-box.

[Waiter takes it from STOUT and brings it back to Old Member.]

Enter BLOUNT.

Blount. So, so ! Evelyn at it again,—eh, Glossmore ?

Gloss. Yes, Smooth sticks to him like a leech. Clever fellow, that Smooth !

Blount. Will you make up a wubber ?

Gloss. Have you got two others ?

Blount. Yes ; Flat and Green.

Gloss. Bad players.

Blount. I make it a wule to play with bad players ; it is five per cent. in one's favour. I hate gambling. But a quiet wubber, if one is the best player out of four, can't do one any harm.

Gloss. Clever fellow, that Blount !

[BLOUNT takes up the snuff-box and walks off with it ; Old Member looks at him savagely.]

[BLOUNT, GLOSSMORE, FLAT, and GREEN, make up a table at the bottom of the Stage.]

Smooth. A thousand pardons, my dear Alfred,—ninety repique—ten cards !—game !

Eve. *[passing a note to him]*. Game ! Before we go on, one question. This is Thursday—how much do you calculate to win of me before Tuesday next ?

Smooth. *Ce cher Alfred !* He is so droll !

Eve. [*writing in his pocket-book*]. Forty games a-night—four nights, minus Sunday—our usual stakes—that would be right, I think !

Smooth [*glancing over the account*]. Quite—if I win all—which is next to impossible.

Eve. It shall be possible to win twice as much, on one condition. Can you keep a secret ?

Smooth. My dear Alfred, I have kept myself ! I never inherited a farthing—I never spent less than £4,000 a-year—and I never told a soul how I managed it.

Eve. Hark ye, then—a word with you—[*they whisper*].

Old Mem. Waiter !—the snuff-box !

[*Waiter takes it from BLOUNT, &c.*

Enter SIR JOHN.

Eve. You understand ?

Smooth. Perfectly ; anything to oblige.

Eve. [*cutting*]. It is for you to deal.

[*They go on playing.*

Sir John [*groaning*]. There's my precious son-in-law, that is to be, spending *my* consequence, and making a fool of himself.

[*Takes up the snuff-box ; Old Member looks at him savagely.*

Blount. I'm out. Flat, a poney on the odd twick. That's wight.—[*Coming up counting his money.*] Well, Sir John, you don't play !

Sir John. Play ? no ! Confound him—lost again !

Eve. Hang the cards !—double the stakes !

Smooth. Just as you please—done !

Sir John. Done, indeed !

Old Mem. Waiter !—the snuff-box.

[*Waiter takes it from SIR JOHN.*

Blount. I've won eight points and the bets—I never lose—I never play in the Deadly Smooth set !

[*Takes up the snuff-box ; Old Member as before.*

Sir John [*looking over SMOOTH's hand, and fidgetting backwards and forwards*]. Lord, have mercy on us ! Smooth has seven for his point ! What's the stakes ?

Eve. Don't disturb us—I only throw out four. Stakes, Sir John ?—immense ! Was ever such luck ?—not a card for my point. Do stand back, Sir John—I'm getting irritable.

Old Mem. Waiter ! the snuff-box.

[*Waiter brings it back.*

Blount. One hundred pounds on the next game, Evelyn ?

Sir John. Nonsense—nonsense—don't disturb him ! All the fishes come to the bait ! Sharks and minnows all nibbling away at my son-in-law !

Eve. One hundred pounds, Blount ? Ah ! the finest gentleman is never too fine a gentleman to pick up a guinea. Done ! Treble the stakes, Smooth !

Sir John. I'm on the rack ! [*seizing the snuff-box*]. Be cool, Evelyn ! take care, my dear boy ! Be cool—be cool.

Eve. What—what ? You have four queens !—five to the king. Confound the cards ! a fresh pack. [*Throws the cards behind him over SIR JOHN.*]

Old Mem. Waiter ! the snuff-box.

[*Different members gather round.*

First Mem. I never before saw Evelyn out of temper. He must be losing immensely !

Second Mem. Yes, this is interesting !

Sir John. Interesting ! There's a wretch !

First Mem. Poor fellow ! he'll be ruined in a month !

Sir John. I'm in a cold sweat.

Second Mem. Smooth is the very devil.

Sir John. The devil's a joke to him !

Gloss. [*slapping SIR JOHN on the back*]. A clever fellow that Smooth, Sir John, eh ? [*Takes up the snuff-box. Old Member as before.*] £100 on this game, Evelyn ?

Eve. [*half turning round*]. You ! well done the Constitution ! yes, £100 !

Old Mem. Waiter !—the snuff-box.

Stout. I think I'll venture £200 on this game, Evelyn ?

Eve. [*quite turning round*]. Ha ! ha ! ha !—Enlightenment and the Constitution on the same side of the question at last ! Oh Stout, Stout !—greatest happiness of the greatest number—greatest number, number one ! Done, Stout !—£200 ! ha ! ha ! ha !—deal, Smooth. Well done, Political Economy—ha ! ha ! ha !

Sir John. Quite hysterical—drivelling ! Ar'nt you ashamed of yourselves ? His own cousins—all in a conspiracy—a perfect gang of them. [*Members indignant.*]

Stout [*to Members*]. Hush ! he's to marry Sir John's daughter.

First Mem. What, Stingy Jack's ? oh !

Chorus of Mems. Oh ! oh !

Old Mem. Waiter ! the snuff-box.

Eve. [*rising in great agitation*]. No more, no more—I've done !—quite enough. Glossmore, Stout, Blount—I'll pay you to-morrow. I—I—Death !—this is ruinous !

[*Seizes the snuff-box ; Old Member as before.*]

Sir John. Ruinous ? I dare say it is. What has he lost ? what *has* he lost, Smooth ? Not much ? eh ? eh ?

[*Omnes gather round SMOOTH.*]

Smooth. Oh, a trifle, dear John !—excuse me ! We never tell our winnings.—[*To BLOUNT.*] How d'ye do,

Fred?—[*To GLOSSMORE.*] By the by, Charles, don't you want to sell your house in Grosvenor Square?—£12,000, eh?

Gloss. Yes, and the furniture at a valuation. About £3,000 more.

Smooth [*looking over his pocket-book*]. Um!—Well, we'll talk of it.

Sir John. 12 and 3—£15,000. What a cold-blooded rascal it is!—£15,000, Smooth?

Smooth. Oh, the house itself is a trifle; but the establishment—I'm considering whether I have enough to keep it up, my dear John.

Old Mem. Waiter, the snuff-box! [*Scraping it round, and with a wry face.*—And it's all gone!

[*Gives it to the Waiter to fill.*

Sir John [*turning round*]. And it's all gone!

Eve. [*starting up and laughing hysterically*]. Ha! ha! all gone? not a bit of it. Smooth, this club is so noisy. Sir John, you are always in the way. Come to my house! come! Champagne and a broiled bone. Nothing venture, nothing have! The luck must turn, and by Jupiter we'll make a night of it!

Sir John. A night of it!!! For Heaven's sake, Evelyn! EVELYN!!—think what you are about!—think of Georgina's feelings! think of your poor lost mother!—think of the babes unborn! think of——

Eve. I'll think of nothing! Zounds!—you don't know what I have lost, man; it's all your fault, distracting my attention. Pshaw—pschaw! Out of the way, do! Come, Smooth. Ha! ha! a night of it, my boy—a night of it!

[*Exeunt SMOOTH and EVELYN.*

Sir John [*following*]. You must not, you shall not!

Evelyn, my dear Evelyn ! he's drunk—he's mad ! Will no one send for the police ?

Mems. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Poor old stingy Jack !

Old Mem. [*rising for the first time, and in a great rage*].
Waiter !—the snuff-box !



ACT IV.—SCENE I.

The Ante-room in EVELYN'S house, as in Scene I., Act II.

TABOURET, MACFINCH, FRANTZ, and other Tradesmen.

Tabou. [*half whispers*]. So, I hear that Mr. Evelyn has turned gamester ! There are strange reports about to-day—I don't know what to make of it ! We must look sharp, Mr. Macfinch, we poor tradesmen, and make hay while the sun shines.

Macfinch. I wuish those geeming-houses were aw at the deevil !—It's a sheam and a sin for gentlemen to gang and ruin themselves, when we honest tradesmen could do it for them with sae muckle advantage to the arts and coummerce o' the country ! [*Omnes shake their heads upprovingly.*]

Enter SMOOTH from the inner room, with a pocket-book and pencil in his hand.

Smooth [*looking round*]. Hum ! ha ! Fine pictures !—
[*Feeling the curtains.*] The new-fashioned velvet, hum ! good proportioned rooms ! Yes, this house is better than

Glossmore's ! Oh, Mr. Tabouret, the upholsterer ! you furnished these rooms ? All of the best, eh ?

Tabou. Oh, the VERY best ! Mr. Evelyn is not a man to grudge expense, sir !

Smooth. He is not, indeed. You've been paid, I suppose, Tabouret ?

Tabou. No, sir, no—I never send in my bills when a customer is rich. [*Aside.*] Bills are like trees, and grow by standing.

Smooth. Humph ! Not PAID ? humph !

[*Omnes gather round.*]

Macfinch. I dinna like that hoomph, there's something vara suspicious abun' it.

Tabou. [*to the tradesmen*]. It is the great card-player, Captain Smooth—finest player in Europe—cleaned out the Duke of Sillyvale. Uncommoningly clever man !

Smooth [*pacing about the room*]. Thirty-six feet by twenty-eight—Um ! I think a bow-window *there* would be an *improvement* : could it be done easily, Tabouret ?

Macfinch. If Mr. Evelyn wants to pool about his house, there's no mon like my friend Mr. MacStucco.

Smooth. Evelyn ! I was speaking of *myself*. Mr. MacStucco ?—humph !

Tabou. Yourself ? Have you bought the house, sir ?

Smooth. Bought it ?—hum !—ha !—it depends—So you've not been paid yet ?—um ! Nor you—nor you—nor you ? Hum ! ha !

Tabou. No, sir !—what *then* ? No fear of Mr. EVELYN ! Ha ! ha !

Omnes [*anxiously*]. Ha ! ha !—what then ?

Macfinch. Ah, sir, what then ? I'm a puir mon with a family ; this way, Captain ! You've a leetle account in

the buiks ; an' we'll e'en wipe it out altogether, gin you'll say what you mean by that Hoom ha !

Smooth. Macfinch, my dear fellow, don't oblige me to cane you ; I would not have Mr. Evelyn distressed for the world. Poor fellow ! he holds very bad cards. So you've not been paid yet ? Don't send in your bills on any account—Mind ! Yes ; I don't dislike the house with some alteration. Good day to you—Hum ! ha !

[Exit, looking about him, examining the chairs, tables, &c.]

Tabou. Plain as a pike-staff ! staked his very house on an odd trick !



SCENE II.

The foregoing.—Enter SHARP from the inner room, agitated, and in a hurry.

Sharp. O Lord ! O Lord !—who'd have thought it ? Cards are the devil's books ! John !—Thomas !—Harris ! —*[ringing the bell]*.

Enter Two Servants.

Tom, take this letter to Sir John Vesey's. If not at home, find him—he will give you a cheque. Go to his banker's, and get it cashed *instantly*. Quick—quick ! off with you !

Tabou. *[seizing Servant]*. What's the matter—what's the matter ? How's Mr. Evelyn ?

Ser. Bad—very bad ! Sate up all night with Captain Smooth !

[Runs off.]

Sharp [*to the other Servant*]. Yes, Harris, your poor master! O dear! O dear! You will take this note to the Belgian minister, Portland-place. Passport for Ostend! Have the travelling carriage ready at a moment's notice!

Macfinch [*stopping Servant*]. Passport! Harkye, my mon; is he gaun to pit the saut seas between us and the siller?

Ser. Don't stop me—something wrong in the chest—change of air—late hours—and Captain Smooth! [*Exit.*]

Sharp [*walking about*]. And if the bank should break!—if the bank is broke, and he can't draw out!—bound to Smooth.

Tabou. Bank!—what bank?

Sharp. Flash's bank! Flash, brother-in-law to Captain Smooth! What have *you* heard?—eh?—eh?

Tabou. That there's an awful run on it!

Sharp. I must be off. Go—go—you can't see Mr. Evelyn to-day!

Tabou. My account, sir!

Macfinch. I've a muckle bairns and a sma' bill!

Frantz. O sare, de great gentlemen always tink first of de tailor!

Sharp. Call again—call again at Christmas. The bank,—the cards,—the bank! O dear! O dear! [*Exit.*]

Tabou. The bank!

Macfinch. The passport!

Frantz. And all dat vil be seen of de great Evelyn coat is de back of it! *Donner und Hagel!*—I vil arrest him—I vil put de salt on de tail of it!

Tabou. [*aside*]. I'll slip down to the city and see how the bank goes!

Macfinch [*aside*]. I'll e'en gang to my coosin the la'yer. Nothing but peetience for us, Mr. Tabouret.

Tabou. Ay, ay,—stick by each other—share and share alike—that's my way, sir.

Omnes. Share and share alike.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Enter Servant, GLOSSMORE, and BLOUNT.

Ser. My master is not very well, my lord ! but I'll let him know. [*Exit.*]

Gloss. I am very curious to learn the result of his gambling tête-à-tête.

Blount. Oh, he's so howwidly wick, he can afford even a tête-à-tête with Deadly Smooth !

Gloss. Poor old Stingy Jack ! why Georgina was *your* intended.

Blount. Yes ; and I really liked the girl, though out of pique I pwoposed to her cousin. But what can a man do against money ?

Enter EVELYN.

If we could start fair, you'd see whom Georgina would pwefer : but she's sacwified by her father ! She as much as told me so !

Eve. So, so, gentlemen, we've a little account to settle—one hundred each.

Both. Don't talk of it.

Eve. [*putting up his pocket-book*]. Well, I'll not talk of it!—[*Taking* BLOUNT *aside*]. Ha! ha! you'd hardly believe it—but I'd rather not pay you just at present: my money is locked up, and I must wait, you know, for the Groginhole rents. So, instead of owing you one hundred pounds, suppose I owe you *five*? You can give me a cheque for the other four. And, harkye! not a word to Glossmore.

Blount. Glossmore! the gweatest gossip in London! I shall be delighted!—[*Aside*]. It never does harm to lend to a wich man; one gets it back somehow. By the way, Evelyn, if you want my gwey cab-horse, you may have him for two hundwed pounds, and that will make seven.

Eve. [*aside*]. That's the fashionable usury: your friend does not take interest—he sells you a horse—[*Aloud*]. Blount, it's a bargain.

Blount [*writing the cheque, and musingly*]. No; I don't see what harm it can do me; that off-leg must end in a spavin.

Eve. [*to GLOSSMORE*]. That hundred pounds I owe you is rather inconvenient at present; I've a large sum to make up for the Groginhole property—perhaps you would lend me five or six hundred more—just to go on with?

Gloss. Certainly! Hopkins is dead: your interest for CIPHER would——

Eve. Why, I can't promise *that* at this moment. But as a slight mark of friendship and gratitude, I shall be very much flattered if you'll accept a splendid grey cab-horse I bought to-day—cost two hundred pounds!

Gloss. Bought *to-day*!—then I'm safe. My dear fellow, you're always so princely!

Eve. Nonsense ! just write the cheque ; and, harkye, not a syllable to Blount !

Gloss. Blount ! He's the town-crier ! [*Goes to write.*]

Blount [*giving EVELYN the cheque*]. Wansom's, Pall-mall East.

Eve. Thank you. So you *proposed* to Miss Douglas !

Blount. Hang it ! yes ; I could have sworn that she fancied me ; her manner, for instance, that vewy day you pwoposed for Miss Vesey, otherwise Georgina——

Eve. Has only half what Miss Douglas has.

Blount. You forget how much Stingy Jack must have saved ! But I beg your pardon.

Eve. Never mind ; but not a word to Sir John, or he'll fancy I'm ruined.

Gloss. [*giving the cheque*]. Ransom's, Pall-mall East. Tell me, did you win or lose last night ?

Eve. Win ! lose ! oh ! No more of that, if you love me. I must send off at once to the banker's [*looking at the two cheques*].

Gloss. [*aside*]. Why ! he's borrowed from Blount, too !

Blount [*aside*]. That's a cheque from Lord Glossmore !

Eve. Excuse me ; I must dress ; I have not a moment to lose. You remember you dine with me to-day—seven o'clock. You'll meet Smooth. [*With tears in his voice*]. It may be the last time I shall ever welcome you here ! My——what am I saying ?—Oh, merely a joke !—good bye—good bye.

[*Shaking them heartily by the hand. Exit by the inner room.*]

Blount. Glossmore !

Gloss. Blount !

Blount. I am afraid all's not wight !

Gloss. I incline to your opinion !

Blount. But I've sold my gwey cab-horse.

Gloss. Grey cab-horse ! you ! What is he really worth now ?

Blount. Since he is sold, I will tell you—Not a sixpence !

Gloss. Not a sixpence ? he gave it to me !

[*EVELYN at the door giving directions to a Servant in dumb show.*

Blount. That was devilish unhandsome ! Do you know, I feel nervous !

Gloss. Nervous ! Let us run and stop payment of our cheques.

[*EVELYN shuts the door, and Servant runs across the stage.*

Blount. Hollo, John ! where so fast ?

Ser. [*in great haste*]. Beg pardon, Sir Frederick, to Pall-mall East—Messrs. Ransom. [*Exit.*

Blount [*solemnly*]. Glossmore, we are fwoored ?

Gloss. Sir, the whole town shall know of it. [*Exeunt.*



SCENE IV.

Enter TOKE and other Servants.

Toke. Come, come, stir yourselves ! we've no time to lose. This room is to be got ready for the shawls. Mrs. Crump and the other ladies of the household are to wait here on the women before they go up to the drawing-

room. Take away that desk: don't be lazy! and give me the newspaper.

[*TOKE seats himself; the Servants bustle about.*

Strange reports about my patron! and the walley is gone for the passport!

Enter FRANTZ with a bundle.

Frantz. Mr. Toke, my goot Mr. Toke, I've brought you von leetel present.

Toke. John and Charles vanish! [*Exeunt Servants.*

I scorn to corrupt them 'ere working classes!

Frantz [*producing a pair of small-clothes which TOKE examines*]. Your master is von beggar! He wants to run away; ve are all in de same vat-you-call-it—de same leetel nasty boat, Mr. Toke! Just let my friend Mr. Clutch up through the area. I vill put vat you call un execution on de gutes and de cattles dis very tay.

Toke. I accept the abridgements: but you've forgotten to line the pockets!

Frantz. Blesh my soul, so I have! [*giving a note*].

Toke. The area-gate shall be left undefended. Do it quietly, no *claw*, as the French say.

Frantz. Goot Mr. Toke—to-morrow I vill line de oter pocket. [*Exit.*

Toke. My patron does not give me satisfaction!

Enter Footman.

Foot. What chandeliers are to be lighted, Mr. Toke?—it's getting late.

Toke. Don't disturb me—I'm rum-mynating!—yes, yes, there's no doubt of it! Charles, the area-gate is open.

Foot. And all the plate in the pantry! I'll run and—

Toke. Not a step ! leave it open.

Foot. But——

Toke [*with dignity*]. 'Tis for the sake of ventilation !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A splendid saloon in EVELYN'S house.

EVELYN and GRAVES.

Graves. You've withdrawn your money from Flash and Brisk ?

Eve. No.

Graves. No !—then——

Enter SIR JOHN, LADY FRANKLIN, and GEORGINA.

Sir John. You got the cheque for £500 safely ?—too happy to——

Eve. [*interrupting him*]. My best thanks !—my warmest gratitude ! So kind in you ! so seasonable !—that £500—you don't know the value of that £500. I shall never forget your nobleness of conduct.

Sir John. Gratitude ! Nobleness !—[*Aside.*] I can't have been taken in ?

Eve. And in a moment of such distress !

Sir John [*aside*]. Such distress ! He picks out the ugliest words in the whole dictionary !

Eve. I've done with Smooth. But I'm still a little crippled, and you must do me *another* favour. I've only as yet paid the deposit of ten per cent. for the great

Groginhole property. I am to pay the rest this week—nay, I fear to-morrow. I've already sold out of the Funds! the money lies at the banker's, and of course I can't touch it; for if I don't pay by a certain day, I forfeit the estate and the deposit.

Sir John. What's coming now, I wonder?

Eve. Georgina's fortune is £10,000. I always meant, my dear Sir John, to present you with that little sum.

Sir John. Oh, Evelyn! your generosity is positively touching [*wipes his eyes*].

Eve. But the news of my losses has frightened my tradesmen! I have so many heavy debts at this moment that—that—that——. But I see Georgina is listening, and I'll say what I have to say to her.

Sir John. No, no—no, no. Girls don't understand business!

Eve. The very reason I speak to her. This is an affair not of business, but of *feeling*. Stout, show Sir John my Correggio.

Sir John [*aside*]. Devil take his Correggio! The man is born to torment me!

Eve. My dear Georgina, whatever you may hear said of me, I flatter myself that you feel confidence in my honour.

Geor. Can you doubt it?

Eve. I confess that I am embarrassed at this moment: I have been weak enough to lose money at play; and there are other demands on me. I promise you never to gamble again as long as I live. My affairs can be retrieved; but for the first few years of our marriage it may be necessary to retrench.

Geor. Retrench!

Eve. To live, perhaps, altogether in the country.

Geor. Altogether in the country !

Eve. To confine ourselves to a modest competence.

Geor. Modest competence ! I knew something horrid was coming !

Eve. And now, Georgina, you may have it in your power at this moment to save me from much anxiety and humiliation. My money is locked up—my debts of honour must be settled—you are of age—your £10,000 in your own hands——

Sir John [*STOUT listening as well as SIR JOHN*]. I'm standing on hot iron !

Eve. If you could lend it to me for a few weeks—— You hesitate ! oh ! believe the honour of the man you will call your husband before all the calumnies of the fools whom we call the world ! Can you give me this proof of your confidence ? Remember, without confidence what is wedlock ?

Sir John [*aside to her*]. No ! [*Aloud, pointing his glass at the Correggio*]. Yes, the painting may be fine.

Stout. But you don't like the subject ?

Geor. [*aside*]. He may be only trying me ! Best leave it to papa.

Eve. Well——

Geor. You—you shall hear from me to-morrow.—
[*Aside.*] Ah, there's that dear Sir Frederick !

[*Goes to* BLOUNT.

Enter GLOSSMORE and SMOOTH ; EVELYN salutes them,
paying SMOOTH servile respect.

Lady Frank. [*to GRAVES*]. Ha ! ha ! To be so disturbed yesterday,—was it not droll ?

Graves. Never recur to that humiliating topic.

Gloss. [to STOUT]. See how Evelyn fawns upon Smooth !

Stout. How mean in him !—*Smooth*—a professional gambler—a fellow who lives by his wits ! I would not know such a man on any account !

Smooth [to GLOSSMORE]. So Hopkins is dead—you want Cipher to come in for Groginhole, eh ?

Gloss. What !—could *you* manage it ?

Smooth. *Ce cher Charles* !—anything to oblige !

Stout. Groginhole ! What can he have to do with Groginhole ? Glossmore, present me to Smooth.

Gloss. What ! the gambler—the fellow who lives by his wits ?

Stout. Why, his wits seem to be an uncommonly productive capital ? I'll introduce myself. How d'ye do, Captain Smooth ? We have met at the club, I think—I am charmed to make your acquaintance in private. I say, sir, what do you think of the affairs of the nation ? Bad ! very bad !—no enlightenment !—great fall off in the revenue !—no knowledge of finance ! There's only one man who can save the country—and that's POPKINS !

Smooth. Is he in Parliament, Mr. Stout ? What's your Christian name, by-the-bye ?

Stout. Benjamin.—No ;—constituencies are so ignorant, they don't understand his value. He's no orator : in fact, he stammers so much—but devilish profound. Could not we ensure him for Groginhole ?

Smooth. My dear Benjamin, it is a thing to be thought on.

Eve. [advancing]. My friends, pray be seated ;—I wish to consult you. This day twelve months I succeeded to an immense income, and as, by a happy coincidence, on

the same day I secured your esteem, so now I wish to ask you if you think I could have spent that income in a way more worthy your good opinion.

Gloss. Impossible ! excellent taste—beautiful house !

Blount. Vewy good horses — [*Aside to GLOSSMORE*] especially the gwey cab !

Lady Frank. Splendid pictures !

Graves. And a magnificent cook, ma'am !

Smooth [*thrusting his hands into his pockets*]. It is my opinion, Alfred—and I'm a judge—that you could not have spent your money better !

Omnes [*except SIR JOHN*]. Very true !

Eve. What say you, Sir John ? You may think me a little extravagant ; but you know that in this world the only way to show one's self thoroughly respectable is to make a thoroughly respectable show.

Sir John. Certainly—certainly ! No, you could not have done better. [*Aside*]. I don't know what to make of it.

Geor. Certainly. — [*Coaxingly*]. Don't retrench, my dear Alfred !

Gloss. Retrench ! nothing so plebeian !

Stout. Plebeian, sir ! — worse than plebeian ! — it is against all the rules of public morality. Every one knows, now-a-days, that extravagance is a benefit to the population—encourages art—employs labour—and multiplies spinning-jennies.

Eve. You reassure me ! I own I did think that a man worthy of friends so sincere might have done something better than feast—dress—drink—play——

Gloss. Nonsense ! — we like you the better for it. [*Aside*]. I wish I had my £600 back, though.

Eve. And you are as much my friends now as when you offered me £10 for my old nurse?

Sir John. A thousand times more so, my dear boy!

[*Omnes approve.*]

Enter SHARP.

Smooth. But who's our new friend?

Eve. Who! the very man who first announced to me the wealth which you allow I have spent so well. But what's the matter, Sharp?

SHARP [*whispering* EVELYN].

Eve. [*aloud*]. The bank's broke!

Sir John. Broke!—what bank?

Eve. Flash, Brisk, and Co.

Gloss. [*to SMOOTH*]. And Flash was your brother-in-law. I'm very sorry.

Smooth [*taking snuff*]. Not at all, Charles,—I did not bank there.

Sir John. But I warned you—you withdrew?

Eve. Alas! no!

Sir John. Oh! Not much in their hands?

Eve. Why, I told you the purchase-money for Grogin-hole was at my bankers'—but no, no: don't look so frightened! It was not placed with Flash—it is at Hoare's—it is, indeed. Nay, I assure you it is. A mere trifle at Flash's, upon my word, now! To-morrow, Sharp, we'll talk of this! One day more—one day, at least, for enjoyment.

Sir John. Oh! a pretty enjoyment!

Blount. And he borrowed £700 of me!

Gloss. And £600 of me!

Sir John. And £500 of me!

Stout. Oh ! a regular Jeremy Diddler !

Smooth [to SIR JOHN]. John, do you know, I think I would take a handsome offer for this house just as it stands—furniture, plate, pictures, books, bronzes, and statues !

Sir John. Powers above !

Stout [to SIR JOHN]. I say, you have placed your daughter in a very unsafe investment. What then ?—a daughter's like any other capital—transfer the stock in hand to t'other speculation.

Sir John [going to GEORGINA]. Ha ! I'm afraid we've been very rude to Sir Frederick. A monstrous fine young man !

Enter TOKE.

Toke [to EVELYN]. Sir, I beg your pardon, but Mr. Macfinch insists on my giving you this letter instantly.

Eve. [reading]. How ! Sir John, this fellow, Macfinch, has heard of my misfortunes, and insists on being paid ;—a lawyer's letter—quite insolent !

Toke. And, sir, Mr. Tabouret is below, and declares he will not stir till he's paid.

Eve. Not stir till he's paid ! What's to be done, Sir John ?—Smooth, what is to be done ?

Smooth. If he'll not stir till he's paid, make him up a bed, and I'll take him in the inventory, as one of the fixtures, Alfred !

Eve. It is very well for you to joke, Mr. Smooth. But——

*Enter Sheriff's Officer, giving a paper to EVELYN,
and whispering.*

Eve. What's this ? Frantz, the tailor. Why, the

impudent scoundrel ! Faith, this is more than I bargained for—Sir John, the bailiffs are in the house !

Stout [*slapping* SIR JOHN *on the back with glee*]. The bailiffs are in the house, old gentleman ! But I didn't lend him a farthing.

Eve. And for a mere song—£150 ! Sir John, pay this fellow, will you ? or see that my people kick out the bailiffs, or do it yourself, or something,—while we go to dinner !

Sir John. Pay—kick—I'll be d——d if I do !—Oh, my £500 ! my £500 ! Mr. Alfred Evelyn, I want my £500 !

Graves. I'm going to do a very silly thing—I shall lose both my friend and my money ;—just like my luck !—Evelyn, go to dinner—I'll settle this for you.

Lady Frank. I love you for that !

Graves. Do you ? then I am the happiest—Ah ! ma'am, I don't know what I am saying !

[*Exeunt* GRAVES and Officer.]

Eve. [*to* GEORGINA]. Don't go by these appearances ! I repeat £10,000 will more than cover all my embarrassments. I shall hear from you to-morrow ?

Geor. Yes—yes !

Eve. But you're not going ?—You, too, Glossmore ?—you, Blount ?—you, Stout—you, Smooth ?

Smooth. No ; I'll stick by you as long as you've a guinea to stake !

Gloss. Oh, this might have been expected from a man of such ambiguous political opinions !

Stout. Don't stop me, sir. No man of common enlightenment would have squandered his substance in this way. Pictures and statues ?—baugh !

Eve. Why, you all said I could not spend my money better! Ha! ha! ha!—the absurdest mistake!—you don't fancy I'm going to prison?—Ha! ha!—Why don't you laugh, Sir John?—Ha! ha! ha!

Sir John. Sir, this horrible levity!—Take Sir Frederick's arm, my poor, injured, innocent child!—Mr. Evelyn, after this extraordinary scene, you can't be surprised that I—I—Zounds! I'm suffocating!

Smooth. But, my dear John, it is for us at least to put an execution on the dinner.

Stout [*aside*]. The election at Groginhole is to-morrow. This news may not arrive before the poll closes.—
[*Rushing to EVELYN.*] Sir Popkins never bribes: but Popkins will bet you £1,000 that he don't come in for Groginhole.

Gloss. This is infamous, Mr. Stout! Cipher is a man who scorns every subterfuge!—[*Aside to EVELYN.*] But, for the sake of the Constitution, name your price.

Eve. I know the services of Cipher—I know the profundity of Popkins: but it is too late—the borough's engaged!

Toke. Dinner is served.

Gloss. [*pausing*]. Dinner!

Stout. Dinner! a very good smell!

Eve. [*to SIR JOHN*]. Turtle and venison too. [*They stop irresolute.*]

Eve. That's right—come along. But, I say, Blount—Stout—Glossmore—Sir John—one word first; will you lend me £10 for my old nurse? [*They all fall back.*]

Ah! you fall back.—Behold a lesson for all who build friendship upon their fortune, and not their virtues!—You lent me hundreds this morning to squander upon

pleasure — you would refuse me £10 now to bestow upon benevolence. Go—^{you} have done with each other—go!

[*Exeunt, indignantly, all but EVELYN and SMOOTH.*

Re-enter GRAVES.

Graves. Heyday!—what's all this?

Eve. Ha! ha!—the scheme prospers—the duper *is* duped! Come, my friends—come: when the standard of money goes down, in the great battle between man and fate—why, a bumper to the brave hearts that refuse to desert us.

[*Exeunt.*



ACT V.—SCENE I.

* * * **'s Club; SMOOTH, GLOSSMORE—other Members.*

Gloss. Will his horses be sold, think you?

Smooth. Very possibly, Charles!—a fine stud—hum!
—ha! Waiter, a glass of sherry!

Gloss. They say he must go abroad!

Smooth. Well; 'tis the best time of year for travelling, Charles!

Gloss. We are all to be paid to-day: and that looks suspicious!

Smooth. Very suspicious, Charles! Hum!—ah!

Gloss. My dear fellow, you must know the rights of the matter: I wish you'd speak out. What have you really won? Is the house itself gone?

Smooth. The house itself is certainly not gone, Charles,

for I saw it exactly in the same place this morning at half-past ten—it has not moved ³/₄ inch.

[Wait. gives a letter to GLOSSMORE.

Gloss. [reading]. From Groginhole—an express ! What's this ? I'm amazed !!! [Reading.] " They've actually, at the eleventh hour, started Mr. Evelyn ; and nobody knows what his politics are ! We shall be *beat* !—the Constitution is gone !—CIPHER ! " Oh ! this is infamous in Evelyn ! Gets into Parliament just to keep himself out of the Bench.

Smooth. He's capable of it.

Gloss. Not a doubt of it, sir !—Not a doubt of it !

Enter SIR JOHN and BLOUNT, talking.

Sir John. My dear boy, I'm not flint ! I am but a man ! If Georgina really loves you—and I am sure that she *does*—I will never think of sacrificing her happiness to ambition—she is yours : I told her so this very morning.

Blount [aside]. The old humbug !

Sir John. She's the best of daughters !—the most obedient, artless creature ! Oh ! she's been properly brought up ! a good daughter makes a good wife. Dine with me at seven, and we'll talk of the settlements.

Blount. Yes ; I don't care for fortune ;—but——

Sir John. Her £10,000 will be settled on herself—that of course.

Blount. All of it, sir ? Weally, I——

Sir John. What *then*, my dear boy ? I shall leave you both all I've laid by. Ah ! you know I'm a close fellow ! " Stingy Jack,"—eh ? After all, worth makes the man !

Smooth. And the more a man's worth, John, the worthier man he must be.

[Exit.

Blount [aside]. Yes ; he has no other child ! she *must* have all his savings ; I don't see what harm it could do me. Still that £10,000,—I want that £10,000 : if she would but wun off now, one could get wid of the settlements.

Enter STOUT [wiping his forehead], and takes SIR JOHN aside.

Stout. Sir John, we've been played upon ! My secretary is brother to Flash's head clerk ; Evelyn had not £300 in the bank !

Sir John. Bless us and save us ! you take away my breath ! But then—Deadly Smooth—the execution—the——oh, he must be done up !

Stout. As to Smooth, he'd "do anything to oblige." All a trick, depend upon it ! Smooth has already deceived me, for before the day's over, Evelyn will be member for Groginhole. I've had an express from Popkins ; he's in despair ! not for *himself*—but for the *country*, Sir John—what's to become of the country ?

Sir John. But what could be Evelyn's *object* ?

Stout. *Object* ? Do you look for an object in a whimsical creature like that ?—a man who has not even any political opinions ! *Object* ! Perhaps to break off his match with your daughter ! Take care, Sir John, or the borough will be lost to your family !

Sir John. Aha ! I begin to smell a rat ! But it is not too late yet.

Stout. My interest in Popkins made me run to Lord Spendquick, the late proprietor of Groginhole. I told him that Evelyn could not pay the rest of the money ! and he told me that——

Sir John. What ?



Stout. Mr. Sharp had just paid it him ; there's no hope for Popkins ! England will rue this day !

Sir John. *Georgina* shall lend him the money ! *I'll* lend him—every man in my house shall lend him—I feel again what it is to be a father-in-law!—[*Aside.*] But stop ; I'll be cautious. *Stout* may be on his side—a trap—not likely ; but I'll go first to *Spendquick* myself. *Sir Frederick*, excuse me—you can't dine with me to-day. And, on second thoughts, I see that it would be very unhandsome to desert poor *Evelyn*, now he's down in the world. Can't think of it, my dear boy—can't think of it ! Very much honoured, and happy to see you as a friend. Waiter, my carriage ! Um ! What, humbug *Stingy Jack*, will they ? Ah ! a good joke, indeed ! [*Exit.*]

Blount. Mr. *Stout*, what have you been saying to *Sir John* ? Something against my chawacter ; I know you have ; don't deny it. Sir, I shall expect satisfaction !

Stout. Satisfaction, *Sir Frederick* ? as if a man of enlightenment had any satisfaction in fighting ! Did not mention your name ; we were talking of *Evelyn*. Only think !—he's no more ruined than you are.

Blount. Not wuined ! Aha, now I understand ! So, so ! Stay, let me see—she's to meet me in the square !

[*Pulls out his watch ; a very small one.*]

Stout [*pulling out his own : a very large one*]. I must be off to the vestry.

Blount. Just in time !—ten thousand pounds ! 'Gad, my blood's up, and I won't be tweated in *this* way, if he were fifty times *Stingy Jack* ! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The drawing-rooms in SIR JOHN VESEY'S house.

LADY FRANKLIN, GRAVES.

Graves. Well, well, I am certain that poor Evelyn loves Clara still, but you can't persuade me that she cares for him.

Lady Frank. She has been breaking her heart ever since she heard of his distress. Nay, I am sure she would give all she has, could it save him from the consequences of his own folly.

Graves [*half aside*]. She would only give him his own money, if she did. I should like just to sound her.

Lady Frank. [*ringing the bell*]. And you shall. I take so much interest in her, that I forgive your friend everything but his offer to Georgina.

Enter Servant.

Where are the young ladies?

Ser. Miss Vesey is, I believe, still in the square : Miss Douglas is just come in, my lady.

Lady Frank. What ! did she go out with Miss Vesey?

Ser. No, my lady ; I attended her to Drummond's the banker. *[Exit.*

Lady Frank. Drummond's !

Enter CLARA.

Why, child, what on earth could take you to Drummond's at this hour of the day ?

Clara [*confused*]. Oh, I——that is—I—Ah, Mr. Graves! How is Mr. Evelyn? How does he bear up against so sudden a reverse?

Graves. With an awful calm. I fear all is not right here! [*Touching his head*].—The report in the town is, that he must go abroad instantly—perhaps to-day.

Clara. Abroad!—to-day!

Graves. But all his creditors will be paid; and he only seems anxious to know if Miss Vesey remains true in his misfortunes.

Clara. Ah? he loves her so *much*, then!

Graves. Um!—That's more than I can say.

Clara. She told me last night, that he said to the last that £10,000 would free him from all his liabilities—that was the sum, was it not?

Graves. Yes; he persists in the same assertion. Will Miss Vesey lend it?

Lady Frank. [*aside*]. If she does, I shall not think so well of her poor dear mother; for I am sure she'd be no child of Sir John's!

Graves. I should like to convince myself that my poor friend has nothing to hope from a woman's generosity.

Lady Frank. Civil! And are men, then, less covetous?

Graves. I know one man, at least, who, rejected in his poverty by one as poor as himself, no sooner came into a sudden fortune than he made his lawyer invent a codicil which the testator never dreamt of, bequeathing independence to the woman who had scorned him.

Lady Frank. And never told her?

Graves. Never! There's no such document at Doctors' Commons, depend on it! You seem incredulous, Miss Clara! Good day!

Clara [*following him*]. One word, for mercy's sake ! Do I understand you right ? Ah, how could I be so blind ! Generous Evelyn !

Graves. You appreciate, and *Georgina* will desert him. Miss Douglas, he loves you still.—If that's not just like me ! Meddling with other people's affairs, as if they were worth it—hang them ! [*Exit.*]

Clara. *Georgina* will desert him. Do you think so ?—*[Aside.]* Ah, he will soon discover that she never wrote that letter !

Lady Frank. She told me last night that she would never see him again. To do her justice, she's less interested than her father,—and as much attached as she can be to another. Even while engaged to Evelyn, she has met Sir Frederick every day in the square.

Clara. And he is alone—sad—forsaken—ruined. And I, whom he enriched—I, the creature of his bounty—I, once the woman of his love—I stand idly here to content myself with tears and prayers ! Oh, Lady Franklin, have pity on me—on him ! We are both of kin to him—as relations, we have both a right to comfort ! Let us go to him—come !

Lady Frank. No ! it would scarcely be right—remember the world—I cannot !

Clara. All abandon him—then I will go alone !

Lady Frank. You !—so proud—so sensitive !

Clara. Pride—when he wants a friend ?

Lady Frank. His misfortunes are his own fault—a gambler !

Clara. Can you think of his faults now ? I have no right to do so. All I have—all—his gift !—and I never to have dreamed it !

Lady Frank. But if Georgina do indeed release him—if she have already done so—what will he think? What but——

Clara. What but—that, if he love me still, I may have enough for both, and I am by his side! But that is too bright a dream. He told me I might call him brother! Where now, should a sister be? But—but—I—I—I—tremble! If, after all—if—if——In one word, am I too bold? The world—my conscience can answer *that*—but do you think that HE could despise me?

Lady Frank. No, Clara, no! Your fair soul is too transparent for even libertines to misconstrue. Something tells me that this meeting may make the happiness of both! You cannot go alone. My presence justifies all. Give me your hand—we will go together! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A room in EVELYN'S house.

Eve. Yes; as yet, all surpasses my expectations. I am sure of Smooth—I have managed even Sharp; my election will seem but an escape from a prison. Ha! ha! True, it cannot last long; but a few hours more are all I require, and for that time at least I shall hope to be thoroughly ruined.

Enter GRAVES.

Well, Graves, and what do people say of me?

Graves. Everything that's bad!

Eve. Three days ago I was universally respected. I awake this morning to find myself singularly infamous. Yet I'm the same man.

Graves. Humph ! why, gambling——

Eve. Cant ! it was not criminal to gamble—it was criminal to lose. Tut !—will you deny that if I had ruined Smooth instead of myself, every hand would have grasped mine yet more cordially, and every lip would have smiled congratulation on my success ? Man—Man ! I've not been rich and poor for nothing ! The Vices and the Virtues are written in a language the world cannot construe ; it reads them in a vile translation, and the translators are — FAILURE and SUCCESS ! You alone are unchanged.

Graves. There's no merit in that. I am always ready to mingle my tears with any man.—[*Aside.*] I know I'm a fool, but I can't help it. Hark ye, Evelyn ! I like you—I'm rich ; and anything I can do to get you out of your hobble will give me an excuse to grumble for the rest of my life. There, now 'tis out.

Eve. [*touched*]. There's something good in human nature, after all ! My dear friend, I will now confide in you : I am not the spendthrift you think me—my losses have been trifling—not a month's income of my fortune, [*GRAVES shakes him heartily by the hand.*] No !—it has been but a stratagem to prove if the love, on which was to rest the happiness of a whole life, were given to the Money or the Man. Now you guess why I have asked from Georgina this one proof of confidence and affection—Think you she will give it ?

Graves. Would you break your heart if she did not ?

Eve. It is in vain to deny that I still love Clara ; our

last conversation renewed feelings which would task all the energies of my soul to conquer. What then? I am not one of those, the Sybarites of sentiment, who deem it impossible for humanity to conquer love—who call their own weakness the voice of a resistless destiny. Such is the poor excuse of every woman who yields her honour—of every adulterer who betrays his friend. No! the heart was given to the soul as its ally, not as its traitor.

Graves. What do you tend to?

Eve. This :—If Georgina still adhere to my fortunes (and I will not put her to too harsh a trial); if she can fate the prospect, not of ruin and poverty, but of a moderate independence; if, in one word, she love me for myself, I will shut Clara for ever from my thoughts. I am pledged to Georgina, and I will carry to the altar a soul resolute to deserve her affection and fulfil its vows.

Graves. And if she reject you?

Eve. [*joyfully*]. If she do, I am free once more! And then—then I will dare to ask, for I can ask without dishonour, if Clara can explain the past and bless the future!

Enter Servant with a letter.

Eve. [*after reading it*]. The die is cast—the dream is over! Generous girl! Oh, Georgina! I will deserve you yet.

Graves. Georgina! is it possible?

Eve. And the delicacy, the womanhood, the exquisite grace of this! How we misjudge the depth of the human heart! How, seeing the straws on the surface, we forget that the pearls may lie hid below! * I imagined her incapable of this devotion.

* “Errors like straws,” &c.

Graves. And *I* too.

Eve. It were base in me to continue this trial a moment longer : I will write at once to undeceive that generous heart [*writing*].

Graves. I would have given £1,000 if that little jade Clara had been beforehand. But just like my luck : if I want a man to marry one woman, he's sure to marry another on purpose to vex me. [*EVELYN rings the bell.*]

Enter Servant.

Eve. Take this instantly to Miss Vesey ; say I will call in an hour. [*Exit* Servant.] And now Clara is resigned for ever ! Why does my heart sink within me ? Why, why, looking to the fate to come, do I see only the memory of what has been ?

Graves. You are re-engaged then to Georgina ?

Eve. Irrevocably.



SCENE IV.

Enter Servant, announcing LADY FRANKLIN and MISS DOUGLAS.

EVELYN and GRAVES.

Lady Frank. My dear Evelyn, you may think it strange to receive such visitors at this moment ; but, indeed, it is no time for ceremony. We are your relations—it is reported you are about to leave the country—we come to ask frankly what we can do to serve you ?

Eve. Madam—I——

Lady Frank. Come, come—do not hesitate to confide in us ; Clara is less a stranger to you than I am : your friend here will perhaps let me consult with him.—[*Aside to GRAVES.*] Let us leave them to themselves.

Graves. You're an angel of a widow ; but you come too late, as whatever is good for anything generally does.

[*They retire into the inner room, which should be partially open.*]

Eve. Miss Douglas, I may well want words to thank you ; this goodness—this sympathy——

Clara [*abandoning herself to her emotion*]. Evelyn ! Evelyn ! Do not talk thus !—Goodness ! sympathy !—I have learned *all—all* ! It is for ME to speak of *gratitude* ! What ! even when I had so wounded you—when you believed me mercenary and cold—when you thought that I was blind and base enough not to know you for what you are ; even *at that time* you thought but of my happiness—my fortunes—my fate !—And to you—you—I owe all that has raised the poor orphan from servitude and dependence ! While your words were so bitter, your deeds so gentle ! Oh, noble Evelyn, this then was your revenge !

Eve. You owe me no thanks—that revenge was sweet ! Think you it was nothing to feel that my presence haunted you, though you knew it not ?—that in things the pettiest as the greatest, which that gold could buy—the very jewels you wore—the very robe in which, to other eyes, you might seem more fair—in all in which you took the woman's young and innocent delight—I had a part—a share ? that, even if separated for ever—even if another's—even in distant years—perhaps in a happy home, listening to sweet voices that might call you “mother !”—even

then should the uses of that dross bring to your lips one smile—that smile was mine—due to me—due, as a sacred debt, to the hand that you rejected—to the love that you despised !

Clara. Despised ! See the proof that I despise you !—see : in this hour, when they say you are again as poor as before, I forget the world—my pride—perhaps too much my sex : I remember but your sorrows—I am here !

Eve. [*aside*]. Oh, Heaven ! give me strength to bear it !—[*Aloud.*] And is this the same voice that, when I knelt at your feet—when I asked but *one day* the hope to call you mine—spoke only of poverty, and answered, “*Never*” ?

Clara. Because I had been unworthy of your love if I had insured your misery. Evelyn, hear me ! My father, like you, was poor—generous ; gifted, like you, with genius—ambition : sensitive, like you, to the least breath of insult. He married, as you would have done—married one whose only dower was penury and care ! Alfred, I saw that genius the curse to itself !—I saw that ambition wither to despair !—I saw the struggle—the humiliation—the proud man’s agony—the bitter life—the early death !—and heard over his breathless clay my mother’s groan of self-reproach ! Alfred Evelyn, now speak ! Was the woman you loved so nobly to repay you with such a doom ?

Eve. Clara, we should have shared it !

Clara. Shared ? Never let the woman who really loves, comfort her selfishness with such delusion ! In marriages like this, the wife cannot share the burden ; it is he—the husband—to provide, to scheme, to work, to endure—to grind out his strong heart at the miserable wheel ! The

wife, alas ! cannot share the struggle—she can but witness the despair ! And therefore, Alfred, I rejected you.

Eve. Yet you believe me as poor now as I was then.

Clara. But *I* am not poor : *we* are not so poor. Of this fortune, which is all your own—if, as I hear, one half would free you from your debts, why, we have the other half still left. Evelyn ! it is humble—but it is not penury.

Eve. Cease, cease—you know not how you torture me. Oh, that when hope was possible ;—oh, that you had bid me take it to my breast and wait for a brighter day !

Clara. And so have consumed your life of life upon a hope perhaps delayed till age—shut you from a happier choice, from fairer fortunes—shackled you with vows that, as my youth and its poor attributes decayed, would only have irritated and galled—made your whole existence one long suspense ! No, Alfred, even *yet* you do not know me !

Eve. Know you ! Fair angel, too excellent for man's harder nature to understand !—at least it is permitted me to revere. Why were such blessed words not vouchsafed to me before ?—why, why come they now ?—too late ! Oh, Heaven—too late !

Clara. Too late ! What, then, have I said ?

Eve. Wealth ! what is it without you ? *With* you, I recognize its power ; to forestall your every wish—to smooth your every path—to make all that life borrows from Grace and Beauty your ministrant and handmaid ; and then, looking to those eyes, to read there the treasures of a heart that excelled all that kings could lavish ;—why *that* were to make gold indeed a god ! But vain—vain—vain ! Bound by every tie of faith, gratitude, loyalty, and honour, to another !

Clara. Another ! Is she, then, true to your reverses ? I did not know this—indeed I did not ! And I have thus betrayed myself ! O, shame ! he must despise me now !



SCENE V.

The foregoing.—Enter SIR JOHN ; at the same time GRAVES and LADY FRANKLIN advance from the inner room.

Sir John [*with dignity and frankness*]. Evelyn, I was hasty yesterday. You must own it natural that I should be so. But Georgina has been so urgent in your defence, that——[*as LADY FRANKLIN comes up to listen*] Sister, just shut the door, will you——that I cannot resist her. What's money without happiness ? So give me your security ; for she insists on lending you the £10,000.

Eve. I know, and have already received it.

Sir John. Already received it ! Is he joking ? Faith, for the last two days I believe I have been living amongst the Mysteries of Udolpho ! Sister, have you seen Georgina ?

Lady Frank. Not since she went out to walk in the square.

Sir John [*aside*]. She's not in the square nor the house—where the deuce can the girl be ?

Eve. I have written to Miss Vesey—I have asked her to fix the day for our wedding.

Sir John [*joyfully*]. Have you ? Go, Lady Franklin, find her instantly—she must be back by this time : take

my carriage, it is but a step—you will not be two minutes gone.—[*Aside.*] I'd go myself, but I'm afraid of leaving him a moment while he's in such excellent dispositions.

Lady Frank. [*repulsing CLARA*]. No, no : stay till I return. [*Exit.*]

Sir John. And don't be down-hearted, my dear fellow ; if the worst come to the worst, you will have everything I can leave you. Meantime, if I can in any way help you——

Eve. Ha!—you!—*you*, too?—Sir John, you have seen my letter to Miss Vesey?—[*Aside*]—or could she have learned the truth before she ventured to be generous?

Sir John. No! on my honour. I only just called at the door on my way from Lord Spend—— that is, from the City. Georgina was out;—was ever anything so unlucky?—[*Without.*] [*Hurrah—hurrah! Blue for ever!*]—What's that?

Enter SHARP.

Sharp. Sir, a deputation from Groginhole—poll closed in the first hour—you are returned! Holloa, sir—holloa!

Eve. And it was to please Clara!

Sir John. Mr. Sharp—Mr. Sharp—I say, how much has Mr. Evelyn lost by Messrs. Flash and Co?

Sharp. Oh, a great deal, sir,—a great deal.

Sir John. [*alarmed*]. How?—a great deal!

Eve. Speak the truth, Sharp,—concealment is all over.

Sharp. £223. 6s. 3d.—a great sum to throw away!

Graves. Ah, I comprehend now! Poor Evelyn caught in his own trap!

Sir John. Eh! what, my dear boy?—what? Ha! ha! all humbug, was it?—all humbug, upon my soul!

So, Mr. Sharp, isn't he ruined after all?—not the least, wee, rascally, little bit in the world, ruined?

Sharp. Sir, he has never even lived up to his income,

Sir John. Worthy man! I could jump up to the ceiling! I am the happiest father-in-law in the three kingdoms.—And that's my sister's knock, too.

Clara. Since I was mistaken, cousin,—since, now, you do not need me,—forget what has passed; my business here is over. Farewell!

Eve. Could you but see my heart at this moment, with what love, what veneration, what anguish it is filled, you would know how little, in the great calamities of life, fortune is really worth. And must we part now,—now, when—when—I never wept before, since my mother died!

*Enter LADY FRANKLIN and GEORGINA, followed by
BLOUNT, who looks shy and embarrassed.*

Graves. Georgina herself—then there's no hope.

Sir John. What the deuce brings that fellow Blount here?—Georgy, my dear Georgy, I want to——

Eve. Stand back, Sir John!

Sir John. But I must speak a word to her—I want to——

Eve. Stand back, I say,—not a whisper—not a sign. If your daughter is to be my wife, to *her* heart only will I look for a reply to *mine*.

Lady Frank. [to GEORGINA]. Speak the truth, niece.

Eve. Georgina, it is true, then, that you trust me with your confidence—your fortune? It is also true, that when you did so you believed me ruined? Oh, pardon the doubt! Answer as if your father stood not there—answer

me from that truth the world cannot yet have plucked from your soul—answer as if the woe or weal of a life trembled in the balance—answer as the woman's heart, yet virgin and unpolluted, *should* answer to one who has trusted to it his all !

Geor. What can he mean ?

Sir John [*making signs*]. She 'll not look this way, she will not—hang her—HEM !

Eve. You falter. I implore—I adjure you—answer !

Lady Frank. The truth !

Geor. Mr. Evelyn, your fortune might well dazzle me, as it dazzled others. Believe me, I sincerely pity your reverses.

Sir John. Good girl ! you hear her, Evelyn.

Geor. What's money without happiness ?

Sir John. Clever creature !—my own sentiments !

Geor. And so, as our engagement is now annulled,—papa told me so this very morning,—I have promised my hand where I have given my heart—to Sir Frederick Blount.

Sir John. I told you,—I ? No such thing—no such thing : you frighten her out of her wits—she don't know what she's saying.

Eve. Am I awake ? But this letter—this letter, received to-day—

Lady Frank. [*looking over the letter*]. Drummond's—from a banker !

Eve. Read—read.

Lady Frank. "Ten thousand pounds just placed to your account—from the same unknown friend to Evelyn." Oh, Clara, I know now why you went to Drummond's this morning.

Eve. Clara ! What !—and the former one with the

same signature, on the faith of which I pledged my hand and sacrificed my heart——

Lady Frank. Was written under my eyes, and the secret kept that——

Eve. Look up, look up, Clara—I am free!—I am released! you forgive me?—you love me?—you are mine! We are rich—rich! I can give you fortune, power,—I can devote to you my whole life, thought, heart, soul—I am all yours, Clara—my own—my wife!

Sir John. [to GEORGINA]. So, you've lost the game by a revoke, in trumping your own father's best of a suit!—Unnatural jade!—Aha, Lady Franklin—I am to thank you for this!

Lady Frank. You've to thank me that she's not now on the road to Scotland with Sir Frederick. I chanced on them by the Park just in time to dissuade and save her. But, to do her justice, a hint of your displeasure was sufficient.

Geor. [half-sobbing]. And you know, papa, you said this very morning that poor Frederick had been very ill-used and you would settle it all at the club.

Blount. Come, Sir John, you can only blame yourself and Evelyn's cunning device. After all, I'm no such vewy bad match; and as for the £10,000——

Eve. I'll double it. Ah, Sir John, what's money without happiness?

Sir John. Pshaw—nonsense—stuff! Don't humbug me!

Lady Frank. But if you don't consent, she'll have no husband at all.

Sir John. Hum! there's something in that. [Aside to EVELYN.] Double it, will you? Then settle it all *tightly*

on her. Well—well—my foible is not avarice. Blount, make her happy. Child, I forgive you.—[*Pinching her arm.*] Ugh, you fool!

Graves [to LADY FRANKLIN]. I'm afraid it's catching. What say you? I feel the symptoms of matrimony creeping all over me. Shall we, eh? Frankly, now, frankly——

Lady Frank. Frankly, now, there's my hand, on one condition,—that we finish our reel on the wedding-day.

Graves. Accepted. Is it possible? Sainted Maria! thank Heaven you are spared this affliction!

Enter SMOOTH.

Smooth. How d'ye do, Altred? I intrude, I fear! Quite a family party.

Blount. Wish us joy, Smooth—Georgina's mine, and—

Smooth. And our four friends there apparently have made up another rubber. John, my dear boy, you look as if you had something at stake on the odd trick.

Sir John. Sir, your very——Confound the fellow!—and he's a dead shot, too!

Enter STOUT and GLOSSMORE hastily, talking with each other.

Stout. I'm sure he's of our side; we've all the intelligence.

Gloss. I'm sure he's of our's if his fortune is safe, for we've all the property.—My dear Evelyn, you were out of humour yesterday—but I forgive you.

Stout. Certainly!—what would become of public life if a man were obliged to be two days running in the same mind?—I rise to explain.—Just heard of your return, Evelyn. Congratulate you. The great motion of the

session is fixed for Friday. We count on your vote. Progress with the times !

Gloss. Preserve the Constitution !

Stout. Your money will do wonders for the party !—
Advance !

Gloss. The party respects men of your property !—
Stick fast !

Eve. I have the greatest respect, I assure you, for the worthy and intelligent flies upon both sides the wheel ; but whether we go too fast or too slow, does not, I fancy, depend so much on the flies as on the Stout Gentleman who sits inside and pays the post-boys. Now all my politics as yet is to consider what's best for the Stout Gentleman !

Smooth. Meaning John Bull. *Ce cher* old John !

Stout. I'm as wise as I was before.

Gloss. Sir, he's a trimmer !

Eve. Smooth, we have yet to settle our first piquet account and our last ! And I sincerely thank you for the service you have rendered to me, and the lesson you have given these gentlemen.—[*Turning to CLARA.*] Ah, Clara, you—you have succeeded where wealth had failed ! You have reconciled me to the world and to mankind. My friends—we must confess it—amidst the humours and the follies, the vanities, deceits, and vices that play their parts in the great Comedy of Life—it is our own fault if we do not find such natures, though rare and few, as redeem the rest, brightening the shadows that are flung from the form and body of the TIME with glimpses of the everlasting holiness of truth and love.

Graves. But for the truth and the love, when found, to make us tolerably happy, we should not be without——

Lady Frank. Good health ;

Graves. Good spirits ;

Clara. A good heart ;

Smooth. An innocent rubber ;

Geor. Congenial tempers ;

Blount. A pwoper degwee of pwudence ;

Stout. Enlightened opinions ;

Gloss. Constitutional principles ;

Sir John. Knowledge of the world ;

Eve. And——plenty of Money !

NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM;

OR,

MANY SIDES TO A CHARACTER.

Dedication.

TO

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G.

MY LORD DUKE,

This Play is respectfully dedicated to your Grace in token of the earnest gratitude, both of Author and Performers, for the genial and noble sympathy which has befriended their exertions in the cause of their brotherhood.

The debt that we can but feebly acknowledge, may those who come after us seek to repay ; and may each loftier Cultivator of Art and Letters, whom the Institution established under your auspices may shelter from care and penury, see on its corner-stone your princely name,—and perpetuate to distant times the affectionate homage it commands from ourselves.

It is this hope that can alone render worthy the tribute which, in my own name as Author, and in the names of my companions the Performers, of the Play first represented at Devonshire House, I now offer to your Grace, with every sentiment that can deepen and endear the respect and admiration

With which I have the honour to be,

My Lord Duke,

Your Grace's most obedient and faithful Servant,

E. BULWER LYTTON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



THE DUKE OF MIDDLESEX, } *Peers attached to the son of James II.,*
THE EARL OF LOFTUS, } *commonly called the First Pretender.*

LORD WILMOT, *a young man at the head of the Mode more than a century ago, son to Lord Loftus.*

MR. SHADOWLY SOTHEAD, *a young gentleman from the city, friend and double to Lord Wilmot.*

HARDMAN, *a rising Member of Parliament, and adherent to Sir Robert Walpole.*

SIR GEOFFREY THORNSIDE, *a gentleman of good family and estate.*

MR. GOODENOUGH EASY, *in business, highly respectable, and a friend of Sir Geoffrey.*

COLONEL FLINT, *a Fire-eater.*

MR. JACOB TONSON, *a Bookseller.*

SMART, *Valet to Lord Wilmot.*

HODGE, *Servant to Sir Geoffrey Thornsides.*

PADDY O'SULLIVAN, *Mr. Fallen's Landlord.*

MR. DAVID FALLEN, *Grubb Street Author and Pamphleteer.*

Coffee-House Loungers, Drawers, Newsmen, Watchmen, &c. &c.

LUCY, *daughter to Sir Geoffrey Thornsides.*

BARBARA, *daughter to Mr. Easy.*

THE LADY OF DEADMAN'S LANE (LADY THORNSIDE).

Date of Play—The Reign of George I. *Scene*—London.

Time supposed to be occupied, from the noon of the first day to the afternoon of the second.

NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM;

OR,

MANY SIDES TO A CHARACTER.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

LORD WILMOT'S *Apartment in St. James's.*

Smart [*showing in a Masked Lady*]. My Lord is dressing. As you say, madam, it is late. But though he never wants sleep more than once a week, yet when he does sleep, I am proud to say he sleeps better than any man in the three kingdoms.

Lady. I have heard much of Lord Wilmot's eccentricities—but also of his generosity and honour.

Smart. Yes, madam, nobody like him for speaking ill of himself and doing good to another.

Enter WILMOT.

Wil. "And sleepless lovers just at twelve awake." Any duels to-day, Smart? No—I see something more dangerous—a woman. [*To SMART.*] Vanish. [*Placing a chair for Lady.*] Madam, have I the honour to know

you ? Condescend to remove your vizard. [*Lady lifts her mask.*] Very fine woman, still—decidedly dangerous. Madam, allow me one precautionary observation—My affections are engaged.

Lady. So I conjectured ; for I have noticed you from the window of my house, walking in the garden of Sir Geoffrey Thornside with his fair daughter : and she seems worthy to fix the affections of the most fickle.

Wil. My dear madam, do you know Sir Geoffrey ? Bind me to you for life, and say a kind word to him in my favour.

Lady. Can you need it ?—young, highborn, accomplished——

Wil. Sir Geoffrey's very objections against me. He says I am a fine gentleman, and has a vehement aversion to that section of mortals, because he implies that a fine gentleman once did him a mortal injury. But you seem moved—dear lady, what is your interest in Sir Geoffrey or myself ?

Lady. You shall know later. Tell me, did Lucy Thornside ever speak to you of her mother ?

Wil. Only to regret, with tears in her eyes, that she had never known a mother—that lady died, I believe, while Lucy was but an infant.

Lady. When you next have occasion to speak to her, say that you have seen a friend of her mother, who has something to impart that may contribute to her father's happiness and her own.

Wil. I will do your bidding this day, and——

Soft. [*without*]. Oh, never mind announcing me, Smart.

Lady [*starting up*]. I would not be seen here—I must

be gone. Call on me at nine o'clock this evening ; this is my address.

Enter SOTHEAD, as LORD WILMOT is protecting Lady's retreat, and stares aghast.

Wil. [aside]. Do not fear him—best little fellow in the world, ambitious to be thought good for nothing, and frightened out of his wits at the sight of a petticoat—*[Aloud, as he attends her out.]* Allow me to escort your Ladyship.

Soft. Ladyship!—lucky dog. But then he's such a villain!

Wil. [returning, and looking at the address]. Very mysterious visitor—sign of Crown and Portcullis, Deadman's Lane—a very funereal residence. Ha, Softhead! my Pylades—my second self! *Animæ—*

Soft. Enemy!

Wil. *Dimidium meæ.*

Soft. *Dimi!* that's the oath last in fashion, I warrant. *[With a swagger and a slap on the back.] Dimidium meæ,* how d'ye do? But what is that lady?—masked too? Oh, Fred, Fred, you are a monster!

Wil. Monster! ay, horrible! That lady may well wear a mask. She has poisoned three husbands.

Soft. *Dimidium meæ.*

Wil. A mere harmless gallantry has no longer a charm for me.

Soft. Nor for me either! *[Aside.]* Never had.

Wil. Nothing should excite us true men of pleasure but some colossal atrocity, to bring our necks within an inch of the gallows!

Soft. He's a perfect demon! Alas, I shall never come up to his mark!

Enter SMART.

Smart. Mr. Hardman, my Lord.

Wil. Hush ! Must not shock Mr. Hardman, the most friendly, obliging man, and so clever—will be a minister some day. But not one of *our* set.

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. And how fares my dear Lord ?

Wil. Bravely—and you ? Ah ! you men who live for others have a hard life of it. Let me present you to my friend, Mr. Shadowly Softhead.

Hard. The son of the great clothier who has such weight in the Guild ? I have heard of you from Mr. Easy and others, though never so fortunate as to meet you before, Mr. Softhead.

Soft. *Shadowly* Softhead :—my grandmother was one of the *Shadowlys*—a genteel family that move about Court. She married a Softhead——

Wil. A race much esteemed in the city.

Hard. A new picture, my Lord ? I'm no very great judge—but it seems to me quite a master-piece.

Wil. I've a passion for art. Sold off my stud to buy that picture. [*Aside.*] And please my poor father. 'Tis a Murillo.

Hard. A Murillo ! you know that Walpole, too, has a passion for pictures.—In despair at this moment that he can't find a Murillo to hang up in his gallery. If ever you want to corrupt the Prime Minister's virtue, you have only to say, "I have got a Murillo."

Wil. Well, if, instead of the pictures, he'll just hang up the *men* he has bought, you may tell him he shall have my Murillo for nothing !

Hard. Bought ! now really, my Lord, this is so vulgar a scandal against Sir Robert. Let me assure your Lordship——

Wil. Lordship ! Plague on these titles among friends. Why, if the Duke of Middlesex himself—commonly styled “the Proud Duke”—who said to his Duchess, when she astonished his dignity one day with a kiss, “Madam, my first wife was a Percy, and *she* never took such a liberty ;”——*

Hard. Ha ! ha ! well, if “the Proud Duke”——

Wil. Could deign to come here, we would say, “How d’ye do, my dear Middlesex !”

Soft. So we would, Fred ! Middlesex.—Shouldn’t you like to know a Duke, Mr. Hardman ?

Hard. I have known one or two—in opposition : and had rather too much of ’em.

Soft. Too much of a Duke ! La ! I could never have eno’ of a Duke ?

Hard. You may live to think otherwise.

Enter SMART.

Smart. His Grace the Duke of Middlesex.

Enter DUKE.

Duke. My Lord Wilmot, your most obedient servant.

* This well-known anecdote of the Proud Duke of Somerset, and some other recorded traits of the same eminent personage, have been freely applied to the character, intended to illustrate the humour of pride, in the comedy. None of our English memoirs afford, however, instances of that infirmity so extravagant as are to be found in the French. Tallamant has an anecdote of the celebrated *Duchesse de Longueville*, which enlivens the burlesque by a bull that no Irish imagination ever surpassed. A surgeon having probably saved her life by bleeding her too suddenly and without sufficient ceremonial—the *Duchesse* said, on recovering herself, that “he was an insolent fellow to have bled her—in her presence.”

Wil. [*Aside.* Now then, courage !] How d'ye do, my dear Middlesex ?

Duke. "How d'ye do ?" "Middlesex !" Gracious Heaven ; what will this age come to ?

Hard. [*to SOFTHEAD*]. Well, it *may* be the fashion,—yet I could *hardly* advise you to adopt it.

Soft. But if Fred——

Hard. Oh ! certainly Fred is an excellent model——

Soft. Yet there's something very awful in a live Duke !

Hard. Tut ! a mere mortal like ourselves, after all.

Soft. D'ye really think so ?—upon your honour ?

Hard. Sir, I'm sure of it,—upon my honour, a mortal !

Duke [*turning stiffly round, and half rising from his chair in majestic condescension*]. Your Lordship's friends ? A good day to you, gentlemen !

Soft. And a good day to yourself. My Lord Du——
I mean, my dear boy !—Middlesex, how d'ye do ?

Duke. "Mid !"—"boy !"—"sex !"—"dear !" I must be in a dream.

Wil. [*to SOFTHEAD*]. Apologise to the Duke. [*To HARDMAN.*] Then hurry him off into the next room. Allow me to explain to your Grace

Soft. But what shall I say ?

Hard. Anything most civil and servile.

Soft. I—I—my Lord Duke, I really most humbly entreat your Grace's pardon, I——

Duke. Small man, your pardon is granted, for your existence is effaced. So far as my recognition is necessary to your sense of being, consider yourself henceforth—annihilated !

Soft. I humbly thank your Grace ! Annihilated !
What's that ?

Hard. Duke's English for excused. [*SOTHEAD wants to get back to the DUKE.*] What! have not you had enough of the Duke?

Soft. No, now we've made it up. I never bear malice. I should like to know more of him; one can't get at a Duke every day. If he did call me "small man," he *is* a Duke,—and such a remarkably fine one!

Hard. [*drawing him away*]. You deserve to be haunted by him! No—no! Come into the next room.

[*Exeunt through side-door.* SOTHEAD *very reluctant to leave the DUKE.*]

Duke. There's something portentous in that small man's audacity.—Quite an aberration of Nature! But we are alone now, we two gentlemen. Your father is my friend, and his son must have courage and honour.

Wil. Faith, I had the courage to say I would call your Grace "Middlesex," and the honour to keep to my word. So I've given good proof that I've courage and honour enough for anything!

Duke [*affectionately*]. You're a wild boy. You have levities and follies. But alas! even rank does not exempt its possessor from the faults of humanity. Very strange! My own dead brother—[*with a look of disgust.*]

Wil. Your brother, Lord Henry de Mowbray? My dear Duke, pray forgive me; but I hope there's no truth in what Tonson, the bookseller, told me at Will's,—that your brother had left behind certain Confessions or Memoirs, which are all that might be apprehended from a man of a temper so cynical, and whose success in the gay world was so—terrible. [*Aside.* Determined seducer and implacable cut-throat!]

Duke. Ha! then those Memoirs exist! My brother

kept his profligate threat. I shall be ridiculed, lampooned. I, the head of the Mowbrays ! Powers above, is nothing on earth, then, left sacred ! Can you learn in whose hands is this scandalous record ?

Wil. I will try. Leave it to me. I know Lord Henry bore you a grudge for renouncing his connexion, on account of his faults—of humanity ! I remember an anecdote how he fought with a husband, some poor devil named Morland, for a boast in a tavern, which—Oh, but we'll not speak of that. We *must* get the Memoir. We gentlemen have all common cause here.

Duke [taking his hand]. Worthy son of your father. You deserve, indeed, the trust that I come to confide to you. Listen. His Majesty, King James, having been deceived by vague promises in the Expedition of 'Fifteen, has very properly refused to imperil his rights again, unless upon the positive pledge of a sufficient number of persons of influence, to risk life and all in his service. Myself and some others, not wholly unknown to you, propose to join in a pledge which our King with such reason exacts. Your assistance, my Lord, would be valuable, for you are the idol of the young. Doubts were entertained of your loyalty. I have come to dispel them—a word will suffice. If we succeed, you restore the son of a Stuart ; if we fail,—you will go to the scaffold by the side of John Duke of Middlesex ! Can you hesitate ? or is silence assent ?

Wil. My dear Duke, forgive me that I dismiss with a jest a subject so fatal, if gravely entertained. I have so many other engagements at present that, just to recollect them, I must keep my head on my shoulders. Accept my humblest excuses.

Duke. Accept mine for mistaking the son of Lord Loftus. *[Goes up to C. D.]*

Wil. Lord Loftus again! Stay. Your Grace spoke of persons not wholly unknown to me. I entreat you to explain.

Duke. My Lord, I have trusted you with my own life; but to compromise by a word the life of another!—permit me to remind your Lordship that I am John Duke of Middlesex. *[Exit.]*

Wil. Can my father have entangled himself in some Jacobite plot? How shall I find out?—Ha! Hardman, Hardman, I say! Here's a man who finds everything out.

Enter HARDMAN and SOFTHEAD.

Softhead, continue annihilated for the next five minutes or so. These books will help to the cessation of your existence, mental and bodily. Mr. Locke, on the Understanding, will show that you have not an innate idea; and the Essay of Bishop Berkely will prove you have not an atom of matter.

Soft. But——

Wil. No buts!—they're the fashion.

Soft. Oh, if they're the fashion——

[Seats himself at the further end of the room; commences vigorously with Berkely and Locke, first one and then the other, and after convincing himself that they are above his comprehension, gradually subsides from despair into dozing.]

Wil. *[to HARDMAN]*. My dear Hardman, you are the only one of my friends whom, in spite of your politics, my high Tory father condescends to approve of. Every

one knows that his family were stout cavaliers attached to the Stuarts.

Hard. [*Aside*]. Ah ! I guess why the Jacobite Duke has been here. I must look up David Fallen ; he is in all the schemes for the Stuarts. Well—and——

Wil. And the Jacobites are daring and numerous ; and, —in short, I should just like to know that my father views things with the eyes of our more wise generation.

Hard. Why not ask him yourself ?

Wil. Alas ! I'm in disgrace ; he even begs me not to come to his house. You see he wants me to marry.

Hard. But your father bade me tell you, he would leave your choice to yourself ; —would marriage then seem so dreadful a sacrifice ?

Wil. Sacrifice ! Leave my choice to myself ? My dear father. [*Rings the hand-bell.*] Smart ! [*Enter SMART.*] Order my coach.

Hard. This impatience looks very like love.

Wil. Pooh ! what do you know about love ?—you,—who love only ambition ! Solemn old jilt, with whom one's never safe from a rival.

Hard. Yes ;—always safe from a rival, both in love and ambition, if one will watch to detect, and then scheme to destroy him.

Wil. Destroy—ruthless exterminator ! May we never be rivals ! Pray keep to ambition.

Hard. [*Aside*]. But ambition lures me to love. This fair Lucy Thornsides, as rich as she's fair ! woe indeed to the man who shall be my rival with her. I will call there to-day.

Wil. Then, you'll see my father, and sound him ?

Hard. I will do so.

Wil. You are the best friend I have. If ever I can serve you in return——

Hard. Tut! in serving my friends, 'tis myself that I serve. [Exit.]

Wil. [after a moment's thought]. Now to Lucy. Ha! Softhead.

Soft. [waking up]. Heh!

Wil. [Aside]. I must put this suspicious Sir Geoffrey on a wrong scent. If Softhead were to make love to the girl—violently—desperately.

Soft. [yawning]. I would give the world to be tucked up in bed now!

Wil. I've a project—an intrigue—be all life and all fire! Why, you tremble——

Soft. With excitement. Proceed!

Wil. There's a certain snarling, suspicious Sir Geoffrey Thornside, with a beautiful daughter, to whom he is a sort of a one-sided bear of a father—all growl and no hug.

Soft. I know him!

Wil. You. How?

Soft. Why, his most intimate friend is Mr. Goodenough Easy.

Wil. Lucy presented me to a Mistress Barbara Easy. Pretty girl.

Soft. You are not courting her?

Wil. Not at present. Are you?

Soft. Why, my father wants me to marry her.

Wil. You refused?

Soft. No. I did not.

Wil. Had *she* that impertinence?

Soft. No; but her father had. He wished for it once;

but since I've become *à la mode*, and made a sensation at St. James's, he says that his daughter shall be courted no more by a man of such fashion. Oh ! he's low, Mr. Easy : very good-humoured and hearty, but respectable, sober, and square-toed ;—decidedly low !—City bred ! So I can't go much to his house ; but I see Barbara sometimes at Sir Geoffrey's.

Wil. Excellent ! Listen : I am bent upon adding Lucy Thornsides to the list of my conquests. But her churl of a father has already given me to understand that he hates a lord——

Soft. Hates a lord ! Can such men be ?

Wil. And despises a man *à la mode*.

Soft. I knew he was eccentric, but this is downright insanity.

Wil. Brief. I see very well that he'll soon shut his doors in my face, unless I make him believe that it is not his daughter who attracts me to his house ; so I tell you what we will do ;—you shall make love to Lucy—violent love, you rogue.

Soft. But Sir Geoffrey knows I'm in love with the other.

Wil. That's over. Father refused you—transfer of affection ; natural pique and human inconstancy. And, in return, to oblige you, I'll make love just as violent to Mistress Barbara Easy.

Soft. Stop, stop ; I don't see the necessity of that.

Wil. Pooh ! nothing more clear. Having thus duped the two lookers on, we shall have ample opportunity to change partners, and hands across, then down the middle and up again.

Enter SMART.

Smart. Your coach waits, my Lord.

Wil. Come along. Fie! that's not the way to conduct a cane. Has not Mr. Pope, our great poet of fashion, given you the nicest instructions in that art?

“Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.”

The cane does not conduct you; you conduct the cane. Thus, with a *debonnair* swing. Now, t'other hand on your haunch; easy, *dégagé*—impudently graceful; with the air of a gentleman, and the heart of a—monster! *Allons! Vive la joie.*

Soft. *Vive la jaw*, indeed. I feel as if I were going to be hanged. *Allons! Vive la jaw!* [*Exeunt.*]



ACT II.—SCENE I.

Library in the house of SIR GEOFFREY THORNSIDE—At the back a large window opening nearly to the ground—Side-door to an adjoining room—Style of decoration, that introduced from the Dutch in the reign of William III. (old-fashioned, therefore, at the date assigned to the Play)—rich and heavy; oak pannels, partly gilt; high-backed chairs, &c.

Enter SIR GEOFFREY and HODGE.

Sir Geof. But I say the dog did howl last night, and it is a most suspicious circumstance.

Hodge. Fegs, my dear Measter, if you'se think that these Lunnon thieves have found out that your honour's rents were paid last woik, mayhap I'd best sleep here in the loibery.

Sir Geof. [*Aside*]. How does he know I keep my monies here ?

Hodge. Zooks ! I'se the old blunderbuss, and that will boite better than any dog, I'se warrant !

Sir Geof. [*Aside*. I begin to suspect him. For ten years have I nursed that viper at my hearth, and now he wants to sleep in my library, with a loaded blunderbuss, in case I should come in and detect him. I see murder in his very face. How blind I've been !] *Hodge*, you are very good—very ; come closer. [*Aside*. What a felon step he has !] But I don't keep my rents here, they're all gone to the banker's.

Hodge. Mayhap I'd best go and lock up the plate ; or will you send that to the banker's ?

Sir Geof. [*Aside*. I wonder if he has got an accomplice at the banker's ! It looks uncommonly like it.] No, I'll not send the plate to the banker's, I'll—consider. You've not detected the miscreant who has been flinging flowers into the library the last four days ?—or observed any one watching your master when he walks in his garden, from the window of that ugly old house in Deadman's Lane ?

Hodge. With the sign of the Crown and Poor Culley ! Why, it maun be very leately. 'Tint a week ago 'sin it war empty.

Sir Geof. [*Aside*. How he evades the question !—just as they do at the Old Bailey.] Get along with you and feed the house-dog—he's honest !

Hodge. Yes, your honour. [*Exit*.

Sir Geof. I'm a very unhappy man, very. Never did harm to any one—done good to many. And ever since I was a babe in the cradle, all the world have been conspiring and plotting against me. It certainly is an ex-

ceedingly wicked world ; and what its attraction can be to the other worlds, that they should have kept it spinning through space for six thousand years, I can't possibly conceive—unless they are as bad as itself ; I should not wonder. That new theory of attraction is a very suspicious circumstance against the planets—there's a gang of 'em ! [*A bunch of flowers is thrown in at the window.*] Heaven defend me ! There it is again ! This is the fifth bunch of flowers that's been thrown at me through the window—what can it possibly mean ?—the most alarming circumstance.

[*Cautiously poking at the flowers with his sword.*]

Mr. Goodenough Easy [*without*]. Yes, Barbara, go and find Mistress Lucy. [*Entering.*] How d'ye do, my hearty ?

Sir Geof. Ugh ! hearty, indeed !

Easy. Why, what's the matter ? what are you poking at those flowers for ?—is there a snake in them ?

Sir Geof. Worse than that, I suspect ! Hem ! Goodenough Easy, I believe I may trust you——

Easy. You trusted me once with five thousand pounds.

Sir Geof. Dear, dear, I forgot that. But you paid me back, Easy ?

Easy. Of course ; but the loan saved my credit, and made my fortune : so the favour's the same.

Sir Geof. Ugh ! Don't say that ; favours and perfidy go together ! a truth I learned early in life. What favours I heaped on my foster-brother. And did not he conspire with my cousin to set my own father against me ; and trick me out of my heritage ?

Easy. But you've heaped favours as great on the son of that scamp of a foster-brother ; and he——

Sir Geof. Ay ! but he don't know of them. And then there was my——that girl's mother——

Easy. Ah ! that was an affliction which might well turn a man, pre-inclined to suspicion, into a thorough self-tormentor for the rest of his life. But she loved you dearly once, old friend ; and were she yet alive, and could be proved guiltless after all——

Sir Geof. Guiltless ! Sir ?

Easy. Well——well ! we agreed never to talk upon that subject. Come, come, what of the nosegay ?

Sir Geof. Yes, yes, the nosegay ! Hark ! I suspect some design on my life. The dog howled last night. When I walk in the garden, somebody or something (can't see what it is) seems at the watch in a window in Deadman's Lane——pleasant name for a street at the back of one's premises ! And what looks blacker than all, for five days running, has been thrown in at me, yonder, surreptitiously and anonymously, what you call——a nosegay !

Easy. Ha ! ha ! you lucky dog !——you are still not bad-looking ! Depend on it the flowers come from a woman.

Sir Geof. A woman !——my worst fears are confirmed ! In the small city of Placentia, in one year, there were no less than seven hundred cases of slow poisoning, and all by women. Flowers were among the instruments they employed, steeped in laurel water and other mephitic preparations. Those flowers are poisoned. Not a doubt of it !——how very awful !

Easy. But why should any one take the trouble to poison you, Geoffrey ?

Sir Geof. I don't know. But I don't know why seven

hundred people in one year were poisoned in Placentia.
Hodge ! Hodge !

Enter HODGE.

Sweep away those flowers !—lock 'em up with the rest in the coal-hole. I'll examine them all chemically, by and by, with precaution. [*Exit HODGE.*] Don't smell at 'em ; and, above all, don't let the house-dog smell at 'em.

Easy. Ha ! ha !

Sir Geof. [*Aside.* Ugh !—that brute's laughing !—no more feeling than a brick-bat !] Goodenough Easy, you are a very happy man.

Easy. Happy, yes. I could be happy on bread and water.

Sir Geof. And would toast your bread at a conflagration, and fill your jug from a deluge ! Ugh ! I've a trouble you are more likely to feel for, as you've a girl of your own to keep out of mischief. A man named Wilmot, and styled "my Lord," has called here a great many times ; he pretends he saved my——ahem !—that is, Lucy, from footpads, when she was coming home from your house in a sedan chair. And I suspect that man means to make love to her !——

Easy. Egad ! that's the only likely suspicion you've hit on this many a day. I've heard of Lord Wilmot. Soft-head professes to copy him. Soft-head, the son of a trader ! *he* be a loungee at White's and Will's, and dine with wits and fine gentlemen ! *He* live with lords !—*he* mimic fashion ! No ! I've respect for even the faults of a man ; but I've none for the tricks of a monkey.

Sir Geof. Ugh ! you're so savage on Soft-head, I suspect 'tis from envy. Man and monkey, indeed ! If a ribbon is tied to the tail of a monkey, it is not the man it enrages ; it is some other monkey whose tail has no ribbon !

Easy [*angrily*]. I disdain your insinuations. Do you mean to imply that I am a monkey? I will not praise myself ; but at least a more steady, respectable, sober——

Sir Geof. Ugh ! sober !—I suspect you'd get as drunk as a lord, if a lord passed the bottle.

Easy. Now, now, now. Take care ;—you'll put me in a passion.

Sir Geof. There—there—beg pardon. But I fear you've a sneaking respect for a lord.

Easy. Sir, I respect the British Constitution and the House of Peers as a part of it ; but as for a lord in himself, with a mere handle to his name, a paltry title ! *That* can have no effect on a Briton of independence and sense. And that's just the difference between Softhead and me. But as you don't like for a son-in-law the real fine gentleman ; perhaps you've a mind to the copy. I am sure you are welcome to Softhead.

Sir Geof. Ugh ! I've other designs for the girl.

Easy. Have you? What? Perhaps your favourite, young Hardman ?—by the way, I've not met him here lately.

Enter LUCY and BARBARA.

Lucy. O, my dear father, forgive me if I disturb you ; but I did so long to see you !

Sir Geof. Why ?

Lucy. Ah, father, is it so strange that your child——

Sir Geof. [*interrupting her*]. Why ?

Lucy. Because Hodge told me you'd been alarmed last night—the dog howled ! But it was full moon last night, and he will howl at the moon !

Sir Geof. [*Aside*]. How did she know it was full moon ? I suspect she was looking out of the window——

[*Enter HODGE, announcing LORD WILMOT and MR. SHADOWLY SOFTHEAD*].—Wilmot ! my suspicions are confirmed ; she *was* looking out of the window ! This comes of Shakspeare having written that infernal incendiary trash about Romeo and Juliet !

Enter WILMOT and SOFTHEAD.

Wil. Your servant, ladies ;—Sir Geoffrey, your servant. I could not refuse Mr. Softhead's request to inquire after your health.

Sir Geof. I thank your lordship ; but when my health wants inquiring after I send for the doctor.

Wil. Is it possible you can do anything so dangerous and rash ?

Sir Geof. How ?—how ?

Wil. Send for the very man who has an interest in your being ill !

Sir Geof. [*Aside*]. That's very true. I did not think he had so much sense in him !

[*SIR GEOFFREY and EASY retire up the stage.*]

Wil. I need not inquire how you are, ladies ? When Hebé retired from the world, she divided her bloom between you. Mistress Barbara, vouchsafe me the honour a queen accords to the meanest of her gentlemen.

[*Kisses BARBARA'S hand, and leads her aside, conversing in dumb show.*]

Soft. Ah, Mistress Lucy, vouchsafe me the honour which—[*Aside.* But she don't hold her hand in the same position.]

Easy. Bravo !—bravo ! Master Softhead !—*Encore !*

Soft. Bravo !—*Encore !* I don't understand you, Mr. Easy.

Easy. That bow of yours ! Perfect. Plain to see you have not forgotten the old Dancing Master in Crooked Lane.

Soft. [*Aside.* I'm not an inconstant man ; but I'll show that City fellow, there are other ladies in town besides his daughter.]—*Dimidium meæ*, how pretty you are, Mistress Lucy ! [*Walks aside with her.*]

Sir Geof. That popinjay of a lord is more attentive to Barbara than ever he was to the other.

Easy. Hey ! hey ! D'ye think so ?

Sir Geof. I suspect he has heard how rich you are.

WILMOT and BARBARA approaching.

Bar. Papa, Lord Wilmot begs to be presented to you.

[*Bows interchanged.* WILMOT offers snuff-box. EASY at first declines, then accepts—sneezes violently ; unused to snuff.]

Sir Geof. He ! he ! quite clear ! — titled fortune-hunter. Over head and ears in debt, I dare say. [*Takes WILMOT aside.*] Pretty girl, Mistress Barbara ! Eh ?

Wil. Pretty ! Say beautiful !

Sir Geof. He ! he ! Her father will give her fifty thousand pounds down on the wedding-day.

Wil. I venerate the British merchant who can give his daughter fifty thousand pounds ! What a smile she has ! [*Hooking his arm into SIR GEOFFREY'S.*] I say, Sir Geoffrey, you see I'm very shy—bashful, indeed—and Mr. Easy is watching every word I say to his daughter : so embarrassing ! Couldn't you get him out of the room ?

Sir Geof. Mighty bashful, indeed ! Turn the oldest friend I have out of my room, in order that you may make love to his daughter ! [*Turns away.*]

Wil. [*to EASY.*] I say, Mr. Easy. My double, there,

Softhead, is so shy—bashful indeed—and that suspicious Sir Geoffrey is watching every word he says to Mistress Lucy : so embarrassing ! Do get your friend out of the room, will you !

Easy. Ha ! ha ! Certainly, my lord. [*Aside.* I see he wants to be alone with my Barbara. What will they say in Lombard-street, when she's my lady ? Shouldn't wonder if they returned me M.P. for the city.] Come into the next room, Geoffrey ; and tell me your designs for Lucy.

Sir Geof. Oh, very well ! You wish to encourage that pampered young—Satrap ! How he does love a lord, and how a lord does love fifty thousand pounds ! He ! he !

[*Exeunt* SIR GEOFFREY and EASY.

Wil. [*running to* LUCY *and pushing aside* SOFTHEAD]. Return to your native allegiance. Truce with the enemy and exchange of prisoners.

[*Leads* LUCY *aside—she rather grave and reluctant.*

Bar. So, you'll not speak to me, Mr. Softhead ; words are too rare with you fine gentlemen to throw away upon old friends.

Soft. Ahem !

Bar. You don't remember the winter evenings you used to pass at our fire-side ? nor the mistletoe bough at Christmas ? nor the pleasant games at Blind-man's Buff and Hunt the Slipper ? nor the strong tea I made you when you had the migraine ? Nor how I prevented your eating Banbury cake at supper, when you know it always disagrees with you ?—But I suppose you are so hardened that you can eat Banbury cake every night now !—I'm sure 'tis nothing to me !

Soft. Those recollections of one's early innocence are

very melting ! One renounces a great deal of happiness for renown and ambition.—Barbara !

Bar. Shadowly !

Soft. However one may rise in life—however the fashion may compel one to be a monster——

Bar. A monster !

Soft. Yes, Fred and I are both monsters ! Still—still—still—'Ecod, I do love you with all my heart, and that's the truth of it.

WILMOT and LUCY advancing.

Lucy. A friend of my lost mother's. Oh ! yes, dear Lord Wilmot, do see her again—learn what she has to say. There are times when I so long to speak of that—my mother ; but my father shuns even to mention her name. Ah, he must have loved her well !

Wil. What genuine susceptibility ! I have found what I have sought all my life, the union of womanly feeling and childlike innocence.

[Attempts to take her hand ; LUCY withdraws it coyly.]

Nay, nay, if the renunciation of all youthful levities and follies, if the most steadfast adherence to your side—despite all the chances of life, all temptations, all dangers——

[HARDMAN'S voice without.]

Bar. Hist ! some one coming.

Wil. Change partners ; hands across. My angel Barbara !

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. Lord Wilmot here !

Wil. What ! does *he* know Sir Geoffrey ?

Bar. Oh yes. Sir Geoffrey thinks there's nobody like him.

Wil. Well met, my dear Hardman. So you are intimate here?

Hard. Ay; and you?

Wil. An acquaintance in its cradle. Droll man, Sir Geoffrey; I delight in odd characters. Besides, here are other attractions. [*Returning to BARBARA.*]

Hard. [*Aside*]. If he be my rival! Hum! I hear from David Fallen that his father's on the brink of high treason! That secret gives a hold on the son.

[*Joins LUCY.*]

Wil. [*to BARBARA*]. You understand; 'tis a compact. You will favour my stratagem?

Bar. Yes; and you'll engage to cure Softhead of his taste for the fashion, and send him back to—the City.

Wil. Since you live in the City, and condescend to regard such a monster!

Bar. Why, we were brought up together. His health is so delicate; I should like to take care of him. Heigho! I am afraid 'tis too late, and papa will never forgive his past follies.

Wil. Yet papa seems very good-natured. Perhaps there's another side to his character?

Bar. Oh yes! He is such a very independent man, my papa! and has *such* a contempt for people who go out of their own rank, and make fools of themselves for the sake of example.

Wil. Never fear; I'll ask him to dine, and open his heart with a cheerful glass.

Bar. Cheerful glass! You don't know papa—the soberest man! If there's anything on which he's severe, 'tis a cheerful glass.

Wil. So, so! does not he *ever*—get a little excited?

Bar. Excited ! Don't think of it ! Besides, he is so in awe of Sir Geoffrey, who would tease him out of his life, if he could but hear that papa was so inconsistent as to—
as to——

Wil. As to get—a little excited ? [*Aside.* These hints should suffice me ! 'Gad, if I could make him tipsy for once in a way !—I'll try.] Adieu, my sweet Barbara, and rely on the zeal of your faithful ally. Stay ; tell Mr. Easy that he must lounge into Will's. I will look out for him there in about a couple of hours. He'll meet many friends from the City, and all the wits and fine gentlemen. *Allons ! Vive la joie !* Softhead, we'll have a night of it !

Soft. Ah ! those were pleasant nights when one went to bed at half after ten. Heigho !

[*As* HARDMAN kisses LUCY'S hand, WILMOT gaily kisses BARBARA'S—HARDMAN observes him with a little suspicion—WILMOT returns his look lightly and carelessly—LUCY and BARBARA conscious.



ACT III.—SCENE I.

Will's Coffee-house ; occupying the depth of the stage. Various groups ; some seated in boxes, some standing. In a box at the side, DAVID FALLEN seated writing.

Enter EASY, speaking to various acquaintances as he passes to the background.

How d'ye do ?—Have you seen my Lord Wilmot ?
—Good day.—Yes ; I seldom come here ; but I've promised to meet an intimate friend of mine—Lord Wilmot.

—Servant, sir!—looking for my friend Wilmot:—Oh! not come yet!—hum—ha!—charming young man, Wilmot: head of the mode; generous, but prudent. I know all his affairs.

Enter Newsman.

Great news! great news! Suspected Jacobite Plot! Fears of ministers!—Army to be increased!—Great news!

[Coffee-house frequenters gather round Newsman—take papers—form themselves into fresh groups.]

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. I have sent off my letter to Sir Robert Walpole. This place, he must give it; the first favour I have asked. Hope smiles; I am at peace with all men. Now to save Wilmot's father. *[Approaches the box at which DAVID FALLEN is writing, and stoops down, as if arranging his buckle.]* *[To FALLEN.* Hist! Whatever the secret, remember, not a word save to me.]

[Passes down the stage, and is eagerly greeted by various frequenters of the Coffee-house.]

Enter LORD LOFTUS.

Lord Lof. Drawer, I engage this box; give me the newspaper. So—"Rumoured Jacobite plot—"

Enter the DUKE OF MIDDLESEX.

Duke. My dear Lord, I obey your appointment. But is not the place you select rather strange?

Lof. Be seated, I pray you. No place so fit for our purpose. First, because its very publicity prevents all suspicion. We come to a coffee-house, where all ranks and all parties assemble, to hear the news, like the rest. And, secondly, we could scarcely meet our agent anywhere

else. He is a Tory pamphleteer : was imprisoned for our sake in the time of William and Mary. If we, so well known to be Tories, are seen to confer with him here, 'twill only be thought that we are suggesting some points in a pamphlet. May I beckon our agent ?

Duke. Certainly. He risks his life for us ; he shall be duly rewarded. Let him sit by our side.—[*LORD LOFTUS motions to DAVID FALLEN, who takes up his pamphlet and approaches openly.*]*—*I have certainly seen somewhere before that very thin man. Be seated, sir. Honourable danger makes all men equal.

Fal. No, my Lord Duke. I know you not. It is the Earl I confer with. [*Aside.* I never stood in *his* hall, with lacqueys and porters.]

Duke. Powers above ! That scare-crow rejects my acquaintance ! Portentous ! [*Stunned and astonished.*]

Lof. Observe, Duke, we speak in a sort of jargon. Pamphlet means messenger. [*To FALLEN aloud.*] Well, Mr. Fallen, when will the pamphlet be ready ?

Fal. [*aloud*]. To-morrow, my Lord, exactly at one o'clock.

Duke [*still bewildered*]. I don't understand—

Lof. Hush ! Walpole laughs at pamphlets, but would hang messengers. [*Aloud*]. To-morrow, not to-day ! Well, more time for—

Fal. Subscribers. Thank you, my Lord. [*Whispering.* Where shall the messenger meet you ?]

Lof. At the back of the Duke's new house, there is a quiet, lone place——

Fal. [*whispering*]. By the old mill near the Thames ? I know it. The messenger shall be there. The signal word, "Marston Moor." No conversation should pass.

But who brings the packet? That's the first step of danger.

Duke [*suddenly rousing himself, and with dignity*]. Then 'tis mine, sir, in right of my birth.

Fal. [*aloud*]. I'll attend to all your Lordship's suggestions; they're excellent, and will startle this vile administration. Many thanks to your Lordship.

[*Returns to his table and resumes his writing. Groups point and murmur. JACOB TONSON advances.*]

Easy. That pestilent scribbler, David Fallen! Another libellous pamphlet as bitter as the last, I'll swear.

Ton. Bitter as gall, sir, I am proud to say. Your servant; Jacob Tonson, the bookseller,—at your service. I advanced a pound upon it.

Duke. I will meet you in the Mall to-morrow, a quarter after one precisely. We may go now? Powers above!—his mind's distracted—he walks out before me!

Lof. [*drawing back at the door*]. I follow you, Duke.

Duke. My dear friend—if you really insist on it?

[*Exeunt, bowing.*]

Hard. [*as the Drawer places the wine, &c., on the table*]. Let me offer you a glass of wine, Mr. Fallen—[*Aside.* Well?—]

[*FALLEN, who has been writing, pushes the paper towards him.*]

Hard. [*reading*]. "At one to-morrow—by the old mill near the Thames—Marston Moor—the Duke in person"—So! We must save these men.—I will call on you in the morning, and concert the means.

Fal. Yes, save, not destroy, these enthusiasts. I'm resigned to the name of a hireling—not to that of a butcher!

Hard. You serve both Whig and Jacobite; do you care then for either?

Fal. Sneering politician ! what has either cared for me ? I entered the world, devoted heart and soul to two causes—the throne of the Stuart, the glory of Letters. I saw them both as a poet. My father left me no heritage but loyalty and learning. Charles the Second praised my verse, and I starved ; James the Second praised my prose, and I starved : the reign of King William—I passed *that* in prison !

Hard. But the ministers of Anne were gracious to writers.

Fal. And offered me a pension to belie my past life, and write Odes on the Queen who had dethroned her own father. I was not then disenchanted—I refused. That's years ago. If I starved, I had fame. Now came my worst foes, my own fellow-writers. What is fame but a fashion ? A jest upon Grub Steet, a rhyme from young Pope, could jeer a score of gray labourers like me out of their last consolation. Time and hunger tame all. I could still starve myself ; I have six children at home—they must live.

Hard. [*Aside.* This man has genius—he might have been a grace to his age.] Too perplexed ; Sir Robert——

Fal. Disdains letters—he renounced them. He pays services like these. ~~What~~ I serve him. Leave me ; go !

Hard. [*rising*]. Not so bad as he seems—another side to the character.

Enter Drawer with a letter to HARDMAN.

Hard. [*Aside*]. From Walpole ! Now then ! my fate—my love—my fortunes !

Easy [*peeping over HARDMAN's shoulder*]. He has got a letter from the Prime Minister, marked “private and

confidential." [*Great agitation.*] After all, he is a very clever fellow.

[*Coffee-house frequenters evince the readiest assent, and the liveliest admiration.*]

Hard. [*advancing and reading the letter*]. "My dear Hardman,—Extremely sorry. Place in question absolutely wanted to conciliate some noble family otherwise dangerous.* Another time, more fortunate. Fully sensible of your valuable service.—ROBERT WALPOLE."—Refused! Let him look to himself! I will—I will—Alas! he is needed by my country; and I am powerless against him. [*Seats himself.*]

Enter WILMOT and SOFHEAD.

Wil. Drawer! a private room—covers for six—dinner in an hour!† And—drawer! Tell Mr. Tonson not to go yet.—Softhead, we'll have an-orgy to-night, worthy the days of King Charles the Second.

Softhead, let me present you to our boon companions;—my friend, Lord Strongbow (hardest drinker in England); Sir John Bruin, best boxer in England—threshed Figg; quarrelsome but pleasant: Colonel Flint—finest gentleman in England, and, out and out, the best fencer;

* As Walpole was little inclined to make it a part of his policy to conciliate those whose opposition might be dangerous, while he was so fond of power as to be jealous of talent not wholly subservient to him, the reluctance to promote Mr. Hardman, implied in the insincerity of his excuse, may be supposed to arise from his knowledge of that gentleman's restless ambition and determined selfwill.

† It was not the custom at Will's to serve dinners; and the exception in favour of my Lord Wilmot proves his influence as a man *à la mode*.

mild as a lamb, but can't bear contradiction, and, on the point of honour, inexorable. Now, for the sixth. Ha, Mr. Easy ! (I ask him to serve you.) Easy, your hand ! So charmed that you've come. You'll dine with us—give up five invitations on purpose. Do—*sans cérémonie*.

Easy. Why, really, my Lord, a plain sober man like me would be out of place——

Wil. If that's all, never fear. Live with us, and we'll make another man of you, Easy !

Easy. What captivating familiarity ! Well, I cannot resist your Lordship. [*Strutting down the room, and speaking to his acquaintances.*] Yes, my friend Wilmot—Lord Wilmot—will make me dine with him. Pleasant man, my friend Wilmot. We dine together to-day.

[*SOTHEAD retires to the background with the other invited guests ; but trying hard to escape SIR JOHN BRUIN, the boxer, and COL. FLINT, the fencer, fastens himself on EASY with an air of patronage.*

Wil. [*Aside*. Now to serve the dear Duke.] You have not yet brought the memoir of a late Man of Quality.

Ton. Not yet, my Lord ; just been trying ; hard work. [*Wipes his forehead.*] But the person who has it is luckily very poor ! one of my own authors.

Wil. [*Aside*. His eye turns to that forlorn-looking spectre I saw him tormenting.] That must be one of your authors : he looks so lean, Mr. Tonson ?

Ton. Hush ; that's the man ! made a noise in his day ; David Fallen.

Wil. David Fallen, whose books, when I was but a schoolboy, made me first take to reading,—not as task-work, but pleasure. How much I do owe him !

[*Bows very low to MR. FALLEN.*

Ton. My Lord bows very low ! Oh, if your Lordship knows Mr. Fallen, pray tell him not to stand in his own light. I would give him a vast sum for the memoir,—two hundred guineas ; on my honour I would ! [*Whispering.*] Scandal, my Lord ; sell like wild-fire.—I say, Mr. Hardman, I observed you speak to poor David. Can't you help me here ? [*Whispering.*] Lord Henry de Mowbray's Private Memoirs ! Fallen has them, and refuses to sell. Love Adventures ; nuts for the public. Only just got a peep myself. But *such* a confession about the beautiful Lady Morland.

Hard. Hang Lady Morland !

Ton. Besides—shows up his own brother ! Jacobite family secrets. Such a card for the Whigs !

Hard. Confound the Whigs ! What do I care ?

Wil. I'll see to it, Tonson. Give me Mr. Fallen's private address.

Ton. But pray be discreet, my Lord. If that knave Curll should get wind of the scent, he'd try to spoil my market with my own author. The villain !

Wil. [*Aside.* Curll ? Why, I have mimick'd Curll so exactly that Pope himself was deceived, and, stifling with rage, ordered me out of the room. I have it ! Mr. Curll shall call upon Fallen the first thing in the morning, and outbid Mr. Tonson.] Thank you, sir. [*Taking the address.*] Moody, my Hardman ? some problem in political ethics ? You turn away,—you have a grief you'll not tell me—why, this morning I asked you a favour ; from that moment I had a right to your confidence, for a favour degrades when it does not come from a friend.

Hard. You charm, you subdue me, and I feel for once

how necessary to a man is the sympathy of another. Your hand, Wilmot. This is secret—I, too, then presume to love. One above me in fortune ; it may be in birth. But a free state lifts those it employs to a par with its nobles. A post in the Treasury of such nature is vacant ; I have served the minister, men say, with some credit ; and I asked for the gift without shame—’twas my due. Walpole needs the office, not for reward to the zealous, but for bribe to the doubtful. See, [*giving letter*] “ Noble family to conciliate.” Ah, the drones have the honey !

Wil. [*reading and returning the letter*]. And had you this post, you think you could gain the lady you love ?

Hard. At least it would have given me courage to ask. Well, well, well,—a truce with my egotism,—you at least, my fair Wilmot, fair in form, fair in fortune, you need fear no rebuff where you place your affections.

Wil. Why, the lady’s father sees only demerits in what you think my advantages.

Hard. You mistake, I know the man much better than you do ; and look, even now he is gazing upon you as fondly as if on the coronet that shall blazon the coach of my lady, his daughter.

Wil. Gazing on me ?—where ?

Hard. Yonder—Ha ! is it not Mr. Easy, whose——

Wil. Mr. Easy ! you too taken in ! Hark, secret for secret—’tis Lucy Thornsides I love.

Hard. You—stun me !

Wil. But what a despot love is, allows no thought, not its slave ! They told me below that my father had been here ; have you seen him ?

Hard. Ay.

Wil. And sounded ?

Hard. No—better than that—I have taken precautions. I must leave you now ; you shall know the result to-morrow afternoon. [*Aside.* Your father's life in these hands—his ransom what I please to demand.—Ah, joy ! I am myself once again. Fool to think man could be my friend ! Ah, joy ! born but for the strife and the struggle, it is only 'mid foes that my invention is quickened ! Half-way to my triumph, now that I know the rival to vanquish !] [*To FALLEN.* Engage the messenger at once, forget not. Nothing else till I see you.] [*To WILMOT.*] Your hand once again. To-day I'm your envoy ; [*Aside* : to-morrow your master.]

[*FALLEN folds up papers and exit.*

Wil. The friendliest man that ever lived since the days of Damon and Pythias : I'm a brute if I don't serve him in return. To lose the woman he loves for want of this pitiful place. Saint Cupid forbid ! Let me consider ! Many sides to a character—I think I could here hit the right one better than Hardman. Ha ! ha ! Excellent ! My Murillo ! I'll not sell myself, but I'll buy the Prime Minister ! Excuse me, my friends ; urgent business ; I shall be back ere the dinner hour ; the room is prepared. Drawer, show in these gentlemen : Hardman shall have his place and his wife, and I'll bribe the arch-briber ! Ho ! my lackies, my coach, there ! Ha, ha ! bribe the Prime Minister ! There never was such a fellow as I am for crime and audacity.

[*Exit WILMOT.*

Colonel Flint. Your arm, Mr. Softhead.

Soft. And Fred leaves me in the very paws of this tiger !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Library in SIR GEOFFREY'S House.

Enter SIR GEOFFREY.

I'm followed ! I'm dogged ! I go out for a walk unsuspectingly ; and behind creeps a step, pit, pat ; feline and stealthy ; I turn, not a soul to be seen—I walk on ; pit, pat, stealthy and feline ! turn again ; and lo ! a dark form like a phantom, muffled and masked—just seen and just gone. Ouf ! The plot thickens around me—I can struggle no more. *[Sinks into a seat.]*

Enter LUCY.

Who is there ?

Lucy. But your child, my dear father.

Sir Geof. Child, ugh ! what do you want ?

Lucy. Ah, speak to me gently. It is your heart that I want !

Sir Geof. Heart—I suspect I'm to be coaxed out of something !—Eh ; eh ! Why she's weeping. What ails thee, poor darling ?

Lucy. So kind. Now I have courage to tell you. I was sitting alone, and I thought to myself—"my father often doubts of me—doubts of all"—

Sir Geof. Ugh—what now ?

Lucy. "Yet his true nature is generous—it could not always have been so. Perhaps in old times he has been deceived where he loved. Ah, his Lucy, at least, shall

never deceive him." So I rose and listened for your footstep—I heard it—and I am here—here, on your bosom, my own father !

Sir Geof. You'll never deceive me—right, right—go on, pretty one, go on. [*Aside.* If she should be my child after all ?]

Lucy. There is one who has come here lately—one who appears to displease you—one whom you've been led to believe comes not on my account, but my friend's. It is not so, my father ; it is for me that he comes. Let him come no more—let me see him no more—for—for—I feel that his presence might make me too happy—and that would grieve you, O my father !

[*Mask appears at the window watching.*

Sir Geof. [*Aside.* She must be my child ! Bless her !] I'll never doubt you again. I'll bite out my tongue if it says a harsh word to you. I'm not so bad as I seem. Grieve me ?—yes, it would break my heart. You don't know these gay courtiers—I do !—tut—tut—tut—don't cry. How can I console her ?

Lucy. Shall I say ?—let me speak to you of my mother.

Sir Geof. [*recoiling*]. Ah !

Lucy. Would it not soothe you to hear that a friend of hers was in London, who——

Sir Geof. [*rising, and a change in his whole deportment*]. I forbid you to speak to me of your mother,—she dishonoured me—

Mask [*in a low voice of emotion*]. It is false !

[*Mask disappears.*

Sir Geof. [*starting*]. Did you say "false ?"

Lucy [*sobbing*]. No—no—but my heart said it !

Sir Geof. Strange ; or was it but my own fancy ?

Lucy. Oh, father, father !—How I shall pity you if you discover that your suspicions erred. And again I say—I feel—feel in my heart of woman—that the mother of the child who so loves and honours you, was innocent.

Hardman's voice without. Is Sir Geoffrey at home ?

[*LUCY starts up, and exit.—Twilight—during the preceding dialogue in the scene, the stage has gradually darkened.*]

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. Sir Geoffrey, you were deceived ; Lord Wilmot has no thought of Mr. Easy's daughter.

Sir Geof. I know that—Lucy has told me all, and begged me not to let him come here again.

Hard. [*joyfully*]. She has ! Then she does not love this Lord Wilmot ?—But still be on your guard against him. Remember the arts of corruption—the emissary—the letter—the go-between—the spy !

Sir Geof. Arts ! Spy ! Ha ! if Easy was right after all. If those flowers thrown in at the window ; the watch from that house in the lane ; the masked figure that followed me ; all bode designs but on Lucy——

Hard. Flowers have been thrown in at the window ? You've been watched ? A masked figure has followed you ? One question more. All this since Lord Wilmot knew Lucy ?

Sir Geof. Yes, to be sure ; how blind I have been !

[*Masked figure appears.*]

Hard. Ha ! look yonder ! Let me track this mystery [*Figure disappears*] : and if it conceal a scheme of Lord Wilmot's against your daughter's honour, it shall need not your sword to protect her. [*Leaps from the window.*]

Sir Geof. What does he mean? Not *my* sword? Zounds! he don't think of his own! If he does, I'll discard him. I'm not a coward, to let other men risk their lives in my quarrel. Served as a volunteer under Marlbro', at Blenheim; and marched on a cannon! Whatever my faults, no one can say I'm not brave. [*Starting.*] Ha! bless my life! What is that? I thought I heard something—I'm all on a tremble! Who the deuce *can* be brave when he's surrounded by poisoners—followed by phantoms; with an ugly black face peering in at his window?—Hodge, come and bar up the shutters—lock the door—let out the house-dog! Hodge! Hodge! Where on earth is that scoundrel?

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Streets—in perspective, an Alley inscribed Deadman's Lane—a large, old-fashioned, gloomy House in the Corner, with the door on the stage, above which is impanelled a sign of the Crown and Portcullis. Enter a Female Figure, masked—looks round, pauses, and enters the door.—Dark—Lights down.

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. Ha! enters that house. I have my hand on the clue! some pretext to call on the morrow, and I shall quickly unravel the skein. [*Exit.*

Goodenough Easy [*singing without*].—

“Old King Cole
Was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he——

[*Entering, with LORD WILMOT and SOTHEAD, EASY, his dress disordered, a pipe in his mouth, in a state of intoxication, hilarious, musical, and oratorical—SOTHEAD in a state of intoxication, abject, remorseful, and lachrymose—WILMOT sober, but affecting inebriety.*

“He called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl,
And he called for his fiddlers three.”

Wil. Ha, ha ! I imagine myself like Bacchus between Silenus and his—ass !

Easy. Wilmot, you're a jolly old soul, and I'll give you my Barbara.

Soft. [*blubbing*]. Hegh ! hegh ! hegh ! Betrayed in my tenderest affections.

Wil. My dear Mr. Easy, I've told you already that I'm pre-engaged.

Easy. Pre-engaged ! that's devilish unhandsome ! But now I look at you, you do seem double : and if you're double, you're not single ; and if you're not single, why you can't marry Barbara, for that would be bigamy ! But I don't care ; you're a jolly old soul !

Wil. Not a bit of it. Quite mistaken, Mr. Easy. But if you want, for a son-in-law, a jolly old soul—there he is !

Soft. [*bursting out afresh*]. Hegh ! hegh ! hegh !

Easy. Hang a lord ! What's a lord ? I'm a respectable, independent family Briton !—Sotthead, give us your fist : you're a jolly old soul, and *you* shall have Barbara !

Soft. Hegh ! hegh ! I'm not a jolly old soul. I'm a sinful, wicked, miserable monster. Hegh ! hegh !

Easy. What's a monster ? I like a monster ! My girl shan't go a-begging any farther. You're a precious good fellow, and your father's an alderman, and has got a great many votes, and I'll stand for the City : and you *shall* have my Barbara.

Soft. I don't deserve her, Mr. Easy ; I don't deserve such an angel ! I'm not precious good. Lords and tigers have corrupted my innocence. Hegh ! hegh ! I'm going to be hanged.

Watch. [*without*]. Half-past eight o'clock !

Wil. Come along, gentlemen ; we shall have the watch on us !

Easy.—

“ And the bands that guard the City,
Cried—‘ Rebels, yield or die ! ’ ”

Enter Watchman.

Watch. Half-past eight o'clock !—move on ! move on !

Easy. Order, order ! Mr. Vice and gentlemen, here's a stranger disturbing the harmony of the evening. I knock him down for a song. [*Seizes the Watchman's rattle.*] Half-past Eight, Esq., on his legs !. Sing, sir ; I knock you down for a song.

Watch. Help ! help ! Watch ! watch !

[*Cries within*, “ Watch !

Soft. Hark ! the officers of justice ! My wicked career is approaching its close !

Easy [*who has got astride on the Watchman's head, and persuades himself that the rest of the Watchman is the table*]. Mr. Vice and gentlemen, the toast of the evening

——what's the matter with the table ? 'Tis bobbing up and down. The table's drunk ! Order for the chair—you table, you ! [*Thumps the Watchman with the rattle.*] Fill your glasses—a bumper toast. Prosperity to the City of London—nine times nine—Hip, hip, hurrah ! [*Waves the rattle over his head ; the rattle springs, and makes all the noise of which rattles are capable.*] [*Amazed.*] Why, the Chairman's hammer is as drunk as the table !

Enter Watchmen with staves, springing their rattles.

Wil. [*drawing SOTHEAD off into a corner*]. Hold your tongue—they'll not see us here !

Watch. [*escaping*]. Murder !—murder !—this is the fellow !—most desperate ruffian.

[*EASY is upset by the escape of the Watchman, and, after some effort to remove him otherwise, the Guardians of the Night hoist him on their shoulders.*]

Easy. I'm being chaired member for the City ! Free-men and Electors ! For this elevation to the post of member for your metropolis, I return you my heartfelt thanks ! Steady there, steady ! The proudest day of my life.—'Tis the boast of the British Constitution that a plain, sober man like me may rise to honours the most exalted ! Long live the British Constitution. Hip—hip—hurrah !

[*Is carried off waving the rattle. SOTHEAD continues to weep in speechless sorrow.*]

Wil. [*coming forth*]. Ha ! ha ! ha !—My family Briton being chaired for the City ! “So severe on a cheerful glass.” Well, he has chosen a son-in-law drunk ; and, egad ! he shall keep to him sober ! Stand up ; how do you feel ?

Soft. Feel ! I'm a ruin !

Wil. Faith, I never saw a more mournful one ! It must be near Sir Geoffrey's !—Led them here—on my way to this sepulchral appointment, Deadman's Lane. Where the plague can it be ? Ha ! the very place. Looks like it ! How get rid of Softhead.—Ha, ha ! I have it. Softhead, awake ! the night has begun—the time for monsters and their prey. Now will I lift the dark veil from the mysteries of London. Behold that house, Deadman's Lane !

Soft. Deadman's Lane ! I'm in a cold perspiration !

Wil. In that house—under the antique sign of Crown and Portcullis—are such delightful horrors at work as would make the wigs of holy men stand on end ! The adventure is dangerous, but deliriously exciting. Into that abode which woman were lost did she enter, which man is oft hanged when he leaves—into that abode will we plunge, and gaze, like Macbeth, “on deeds without a name.”

Enter Masked Figure from the door in Deadman's Lane, and approaches WILMOT, who has, till now, hold of SOFTEAD.

Soft. Hegh ! hegh ! hegh ! I won't gaze on deeds without a name ! I won't plunge into Deadmen's abodes ! [*Perceiving the figure.*] Ha ! Look there ! Dark veil, indeed ! Mysteries of London ! Horrible apparition, avaunt ! [*Breaks from WILMOT, who releases him here, and not till now, as he sees the figure.*] Hegh ! hegh ! I'll go home to my mother. [*Exit.*

[*Mask motions to WILMOT, who follows her into the house.*]

[*Exeunt Mask and WILMOT within the house.*

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

The Library in SIR GEOFFREY'S house.

HARDMAN and SIR GEOFFREY.

Sir Geof. Yes ! I've seen that you're not indifferent to Lucy. But before I approve or discourage, just tell me more of yourself,—your birth, your fortune, past life. Of course, you are the son of a gentleman ? [*Aside.*] Now as he speaks truly or falsely I will discard him as a liar, or reward him with Lucy's hand.—He turns aside. He will lie !

Hard. Sir, at the risk of my hopes, I will speak the hard truth. "The son of a gentleman !" I think not. My infancy passed in the house of a farmer ; the children with whom I played told me I was an orphan. I was next dropped, how I know not, in the midst of that rough world called school. "You have talent," said the master, "but you're idle ; you have no right to holidays ; you must force your way through life ; you are sent here by charity."

Sir Geof. Charity ! *There*, the old fool was wrong !

Hard. My idleness vanished—I became the head of the school. Then I resolved no longer to be the pupil of—Charity. At the age of sixteen I escaped, and took for my motto—the words of the master—"You must force your way through life." Hope and pride whispered—"You'll force it !"

Sir Geof. Poor fellow ! What then ?

Hard. Eight years of wandering, adventure, hardship, and trial. I often wanted bread—never courage. At the end of those years I had risen—to what? A desk at a lawyer's office in Norfolk.—

Sir Geof. [*Aside*]. My own lawyer? where I first caught trace of him again.

Hard. Party spirit ran high in town. Politics began to bewitch me. There was a Speaking Club, and I spoke. My ambition rose higher—took the flight of an author. I came up to London with ten pounds in my pocket, and a work on the "State of the Nation." It sold well; the publisher brought me four hundred pounds. "Vast fortunes," said he, "are made in the South Sea Scheme. Venture your hundreds,—I'll send you a broker."—

Sir Geof. He! he! I hope he was clever, that broker?

Hard. Clever indeed: in a fortnight he said to me, "Your hundreds have swelled into thousands. For this money I can get you an Annuity on land, just enough for a parliamentary qualification." The last hint fired me—I bought the Annuity. You now know my fortune, and how it was made.

Sir Geof. [*Aside*]. He! he! I must tell this to Easy: how he'll enjoy it.

Hard. Not long after, at a political coffee-house, a man took me aside. "Sir," said he, "you are Mr. Hardman who wrote the famous work on 'The State of the Nation.' Will you come into Parliament? We want a man like you for our borough; we'll return you free of expense; not a shilling of bribery."

Sir Geof. He! he! Wonderful! not a shilling of bribery.

Hard. The man kept his word, and I came into Par-

liament—inexperienced and friendless. I spoke, and was laughed at ; spoke again, and was listened to ; failed often ; succeeded at last. Here, yesterday, in ending my tale I must have said, looking down, “ Can you give your child to a man of birth more than doubtful ; and of fortunes so humble ? ” Yet aspiring even then to the hand of your heiress, I wrote to Sir Robert for a place just vacated by a man of high rank, who is raised to the peerage. He refused.

Sir Geof. Of course. [*Aside.*] I suspect he’s very rash and presuming.

Hard. To-day the refusal is retracted—the office is mine.

Sir Geof. [*astonished and aside*]. Ha ! I had no hand in that !

Hard. I am now one—if not of the highest—yet still one of that Government through which the Majesty of England administers her laws. And, with front erect, I say to you—as I would to the first peer of the realm—“ I have no charts of broad lands, and no roll of proud fathers. But alone and unfriended, I have fought my way against Fortune. Did your ancestors more ? My country has trusted the new man to her councils, and the man whom she honours is the equal of all.”

Sir Geof. Brave fellow, your hand. Win Lucy’s consent, and you have mine. Hush ! no thanks ! Now listen ; I have told you my dark story—these flowers cannot come from Wilmot. I have examined them again—they are made up in the very form of the posies I had the folly to send, in the days of our courtship, to the wife who afterwards betrayed me——

Hard. Be not so sure that she betrayed. No proof but the boast of a profligate.

Sir Geof. Who had been my intimate friend for years—so that, O torture! I am haunted with the doubt whether my heiress be my own child! and to whom (by the confession of a servant) she sent a letter in secret the very day on which I struck the mocking boast from the villain's lips, in a public tavern. Ah, he was always a wit and a scoffer—perhaps it is from him that these flowers are sent, in token of gibe and insult. He has discovered the man he dishonoured, in spite of the change of name——

Hard. You changed your name for an inheritance. You have not told me that which you formerly bore.

Sir Geof. Morland?

Hard. Morland—Ha—and the seducer's——

Sir Geof. Lord Henry de Mowbray——

Hard. The reprobate brother of the Duke of Middlesex! He died a few months since.

Sir Geof. [*sinking down*]. Died too! Both dead!

Hard. [*Aside*]. Tonson spoke of Lord Henry's Memoir—Confession about Lady Morland in Fallen's hands.—I will go to Fallen at once. [*Aloud.*] You have given me a new clue. I will follow it up.—When can I see you again?

Sir Geof. I'm going to Easy's—you'll find me there all the morning. But don't forget Lucy,—we must save her from Wilmot.

Hard. Fear Wilmot no more.—This day he shall abandon his suit. [*Exit HARDMAN.*]

Sir Geof. Hodge!—Well—well——

Enter HODGE.

—Hodge, take your hat and your bludgeon—attend me

to the City. [*Aside.*] She'll be happy with Hardman.
Ah ! if she were my own child after all !

[*Exeunt* SIR GEOFFREY and HODGE.

SCENE II.

DAVID FALLEN'S *Garret.* *The scene resembling that of Hogarth's*
" *Distrest Poet.*"

Fal. [*opening the casement*]. So, the morning air breathes
fresh ! One moment's respite from drudgery. Another
line to this poem, my grand bequest to my country ! Ah !
this description ; unfinished ; good, good.

" Methinks we walk in dreams on fairy land
Where—golden ore—lies mix'd with ——" *

Enter PADDY.

Paddy. Please, sir, the milkwoman's score !

Fal. Stay, stay ;—

" Lies mixed with—common sand ! "

Eh ? Milkwoman ? She must be paid, or the children
—I—I—[*Fumbling in his pocket, and looking about the*
table]. There's another blanket on the bed ; pawn it.

Paddy. Agh, now ! don't be so ungrateful to your ould

* As it would be obviously presumptuous to assign to an author so eminent as Mr. David Fallen, any verses composed by a living writer, the two lines in the text are taken from Mr. Dryden's *Indian Emperor*.

friend, the blanket. When Mr. Tonson, the great book-shiller, tould me, says he, "Paddy, I'd giv two hunder gould guineas for the papursh Mr. Fallen has in his disk!"

Fal. Go, go! [*Knock.*

Paddy. Agh, murther! Who can that be distarbin' the door at the top of the mornin'? [*Exit.*

Fal. Oh! that fatal Memoir! My own labours scarce keep me from starving, and this wretched scrawl of a profligate worth what to me were Golconda! Heaven sustain me! I'm tempted.

Enter PADDY, and WILMOT disguised as EDMUND CURLL.

Paddy. Stoop your head, sir. 'Tis not a dun, sir; 'tis Mr. Curll; says he's come to outbid Mr. Tonson, sir.

Fal. Go quick; pawn the blanket. Let me think my children are fed. [*Exit PADDY.*] Now, sir, what do you want?

Wil. [*taking out his handkerchief and whimpering*]. My dear good Mr. Fallen—no offence—I do so feel for the distresses of genius. I *am* a bookseller, but I have a heart—and I'm come to buy——

Fal. Have you? this poem? it is nearly finished—twelve books—twenty years' labour—twenty-four thousand lines!—ten pounds, Mr. Curll, ten pounds?

Wil. Price of *Paradise Lost*! Can't expect such prices for poetry now-a-days, my dear Mr. Fallen. Nothing takes that is not sharp and spicy. Hum! I hear you have some most interesting papers; private Memoirs and Confessions of a Man of Quality recently deceased. Nay, nay, Mr. Fallen! don't shrink back; I'm not like that shabby dog, Tonson. Threø hundred guineas for the Memoir of Lord Henry de Mowbray.

Fal. Three hundred guineas for that garbage !—not ten for the Poem !—and—the children ! Well ! [*Takes out the Memoir in a portfolio, splendidly bound, with the arms and supporters of the Mowbrays blazoned on the sides.*] Ah !—but the honour of a woman—the secrets of a family—the——

Wil. [*grasping at the portfolio which FALLEN still detains.*] Nothing sells better, my dear, dear Mr. Fallen ! But how, how did you come by these treasures, my excellent friend ?

Fal. How ? Lord Henry gave them to me himself, on his death-bed.

Wil. Nay ; what could he give them for, but to publish, my sweet Mr. Fallen ; no doubt to immortalize all the ladies who loved him.

Fal. No, sir ; profligate as he was, and vile as may be much in this Memoir, that was not his dying intention, though it might be his first. There was a lady he had once foully injured—the sole woman he had ever loved eno' for remorse. This Memoir contains a confession that might serve to clear the name he himself had aspersed ; and in the sudden repentance of his last moments, he bade me seek the lady, and place the whole in her hands, to use as best might serve to establish her innocence.

Wil. How could you know the lady, my benevolent friend ?

Fal. I did not ; but she was supposed to be abroad with her father,—a Jacobite exile,—and I, then a Jacobite agent, had the best chance to trace her.

Wil. And you did ?

Fal. But to hear she had died somewhere in France.

Wil. Then, of course you may now gratify our intelligent Public, for your own personal profit. Clear as day

my magnanimous friend ! Three hundred guineas ! I have 'em here in a bag !

Fal. Begone ! I will not sell man's hearth to the public.

Wil. [*Aside.* Noble fellow !] Gently, gently, my too warm, but high-spirited friend ! To say the truth, I don't come on my own account. To whom, my dear sir, since the lady is dead, *should* be given these papers, if unfit for a virtuous, but inquisitive public ? Why, surely to Lord Henry's nearest relation. I am employed by the rich Duke of Middlesex. Name your terms.

Fal. Ha ! ha ! Then at last he comes crawling to me, your proud Duke ? Sir, years ago, when a kind word from his Grace, a nod of his head, a touch of his hand, would have turned my foes into flatterers, I had the meanness to name him my patron—inscribed to him a work, took it to his house, and waited in his hall among porters and lackeys—till, sweeping by to his carriage, he said, “ Oh ! you are the poet ? take this,”—and extending his alms, as if to a beggar. “ You look very thin, sir ; stay and dine with my people.” People—his servants !

Wil. Calm yourself, my good Mr. Fallen ! 'tis his Grace's innocent way with us all.

Fal. Go ! let him know what these Memoirs contain ! They would make the proud Duke the butt of the town—the jeer of the lackeys, who jeered at my rags ; expose his frailties, his follies, his personal secrets. Tell him this ; and then say that my poverty shall not be the tool of his brother's revenge : but my pride shall not stoop from its pedestal to take money from him. Now, sir, am I right ? Reply, not as tempter to pauper ; but if one spark of manhood be in you, as man speaks to man.

Wil. [*resuming his own manner*]. I reply, sir, as man

to man, and gentleman to gentleman. I am Frederick, Lord Wilmot. Pardon this imposture. The Duke is my father's friend. I am here to obtain, what it is clear that he alone should possess. Mr. Fallen, your works first raised me from the world of the senses, and taught me to believe in such nobleness as I now hope for in you. Give me this record to take to the Duke—no price, sir ; for such things are priceless—and let me go hence with the sight of this poverty before my eyes, and on my soul the grand picture of the man who has spurned the bribe to his honour, and can humble by a gift the great prince who insulted him by alms.

Fal. Take it—take it ! [*Gives the portfolio.*] I am saved from temptation. God bless you, young man !

Wil. Now you indeed make me twofold your debtor—in your books, the rich thought ; in yourself the heroic example. Accept from my superfluities, in small part of such debt, a yearly sum equal to that which your poverty refused as a bribe from Mr. Tonson.

Fal. My Lord—my Lord—— [*Bursts into tears.*

Wil. Oh, trust me the day shall come, when men will feel that it is not charity we owe to the ennoblers of life—it is tribute ! When your Order shall rise with the civilization it called into being ; and shall refer its claim to just rank among freemen, to some Queen whom even a Milton might have sung, and even a Hampden have died for.

Fal. O dream of my youth ! My heart swells and chokes me !

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. What's this ? Fallen weeping ?—Ah ! is not that the tyrannical sneak, Edmund Curll ?——

Wil. [*changing his tone to FALLEN into one of imperiousness*]. Can't hear of the poem, Mr. Fallen. Don't tell me. Ah! Mr. Hardman [*concealing the portfolio*], your most humble! Sir—sir—if you want to publish something smart and spicy—Secret Anecdotes of Cabinets—Sir Robert Walpole's Adventures with the Ladies—I'll come down as handsomely as any man in the Row—smart and spicy——

Hard. Offer to bribe *me*, you insolent rascal!

Wil. Oh, my dear good Mr. Hardman, I've bribed the Premier himself. Ha! ha! Servant, sir; servant.

[*Exit.*

Hard. Loathsome vagabond! My dear Mr. Fallen, you have the manuscript Memoir of Lord Henry de Mowbray. I know its great value. Name your own price to permit me just to inspect it.

Fal. It is gone; and to the hands of his brother, the Duke.

Hard. The Duke! This is a thunder-stroke! Say, sir: you have read this Memoir—does it contain aught respecting a certain Lady Morland?

Fal. It does. It confesses that Lord Henry slandered her reputation as woman in order to sustain his own as a seducer. That part of the Memoir was writ on his death-bed.

Hard. His boast, then——

Fal. Was caused by the scorn of her letter rejecting his suit.

Hard. What joy for Sir Geoffrey! And that letter?

Fal. Is one of the documents that make up the Memoir.

Hard. And these documents are now in the hands of the Duke!

Fal. They are. For, since Lady Morland is dead——

Hard. Are you sure she is dead ?

Fal. I only go by report——

Hard. Report often lies. [*Aside.* Who but Lady Morland can this mask be ? I will go at once to the house and clear up that doubt myself. But the Duke's appointment ! Ah, that must not be forgotten ; my rival must be removed ere Lucy can be won. And what hold on the Duke himself to produce the Memoir, if I get the despatch.] Well, Mr. Fallen, there is no more to be said as to the Memoir. Your Messenger will meet his Grace, as we settled. I shall be close at hand ; and mark ! the messenger must give me the despatch which is meant for the Pretender. [*Exit HARDMAN.*

Enter PADDY.

Paddy. Plase, sur, an' I've paid the milk-score——

Fal. [*interrupting him*]. I'm to be rich—so rich ! 'Tis my turn now. I've shared your pittance, you shall share my plenty ! [*Scene closes.*

SCENE III.

The Mall.

Enter SOTTHEAD, his arms folded, and in deep thought.

He is forming a virtuous resolution.

Soft. Little did I foresee, in the days of my innocence, when Mr. Lillo read to me his affecting tragedy of George

Barnwell,* how I myself was to be led on, step by step, to the brink of deeds without a name. Deadman's Lane!—that funereal apparition in black!—a warning to startle the most obdurate conscience!

Enter EASY, recently dismissed from the Watch-house ; slovenly, skulking, and crestfallen.

Easy. Not a coach on the stand! A pretty pickle I'm in if any one sees me! A sober, respectable man like me, to wake in the watch-house, be kept there till noon among thieves and pickpockets, and at last to be fined five shillings for drunkenness and disorderly conduct; all from dining with a lord who had no thoughts of making Barbara my Lady after all!—Deuce take him!

Easy [*discovering* *SOFTHEAD*]. Softhead! how shall I escape him?

Soft. [*discovering* *EASY*]. Easy! WHAT A FALL! I'll appear not to remember. Barbara's father should not feel degraded in the eyes of a wretch like myself! How d'ye do, Mr. Easy? You're out early to-day.

Easy. [*Aside.* Ha! He was so drunk himself he has forgotten all about it.] Yes, a headache. You were so pleasant at dinner. I wanted the air of the park.

Soft. Why, you look rather poorly, Mr. Easy!

Easy. Indeed, I feel so. A man in business can't afford to be laid up—so I thought, before I went home to the City, that I'd just look into—Ha, ha, a seasoned toper like you will laugh when I tell you—I thought I'd just look into the 'pothecary's!

* We have only, I fear, Mr. Softhead's authority for supposing *George Barnwell* to be then written: it was not acted till some years afterwards.

Soft. Just been there myself, Mr. Easy.

[*Showing a phial.*]

Easy [*regarding it with mournful disgust*]. Not taken physic since I was a boy ! It looks very nasty !

Soft. 'Tis worse than it looks ! And this is called *Pleasure* ! Ah ! Mr. Easy, don't give way to Fred's fascination ; you don't know how it ends.

Easy. Indeed I do [*Aside.* It ends in the watch-house]. And I'm shocked to think what will become of yourself, if you are thus every night led away by a lord, who——

Soft. Hush ! talk of the devil—look ! he's coming up the Mall !

Easy. He is ? then I'm off ; I see a sedan-chair. Chair ! chair ! stop !—chair ! chair ! [*Exit.*]

Enter WILMOT and DUKE.

Duke [*looking at portfolio*]. Infamous indeed ! His own base lie against that poor lady, whose husband he wounded. Her very letter attached to it. Ha !—what is this ?—Such ribaldry on me ! Gracious Heaven ! My name thus dragged through the dirt, and by a son of my house ! Oh, my Lord, how shall I thank you ?

Wil. Thank not me ; but the poet, whom your Grace left in the hall.

Duke. Name it not—I'll beg his pardon myself ! Adieu ; I must go home and lock up this scandal till I've leisure to read and destroy it ; never again shall it come to the day ! And then, sure that no blot shall be seen in my 'scutcheon, I can peril my life without fear in the cause of my king. [*Exit DUKE.*]

Wil. [*chanting*].

“ Gather you rosebuds while you may,
For time is still a-flying.”

Since my visit last night to Deadman's Lane, and my hope to give Lucy such happiness, I feel as if I trod upon air. Ah, Softhead! why, you stand there as languid and lifeless, as if you were capable of—fishing!

Soft. I've been thinking——

Wil. Thinking! you *do* look fatigued! What a horrid exertion it must have been to you!

Soft. Ah! Fred, Fred, don't be so hardened. What atrocity did you perpetrate last night?

Wil. Last night? Oh, at Deadman's Lane: monstrous, indeed. And this morning, too, another! Never had so many atrocities on my hands as within the last twenty-four hours. But they are all nothing to that which I perpetrated yesterday, just before dinner. Hark! I bribed the Prime Minister.

Soft. Saints in Heaven!

Wil. Ha! ha! Hit him plump on the jolly blunt side of his character! I must tell you about it. Drove home from Will's; put my Murillo in the carriage, and off to Sir Robert's—shown into his office,—“Ah! my Lord Wilmot,” says he, with that merry roll of his eye; “this *is* an honour, what can I do for you?”—“Sir Robert,” says I, “we men of the world soon come to the point; 'tis a maxim of yours that all have their price.”—“Not quite that,” says Sir Robert, “but let us suppose that it is.” Another roll of his eye, as much as to say, “I shall get this rogue a bargain!”—“So, Sir Robert,” quoth I, with a bow, “I've come to buy the Prime Minister.”—“Buy me,” cried Sir Robert, and he laughed till I thought he'd have choked; “my price is rather high, I'm afraid.” Then I go to the door, bid my lackeys bring in the Murillo. “Look at that, if you please; about the mark, is it not?” Sir Robert runs to the picture

his breast heaves, his eyes sparkle : “ A Murillo ! ” cries he, “ name your price ! ” — “ I have named it. ” Then he looks at me *so*, and I look at him *so* ! — turn out the lackeys, place pen, ink, and paper before him ; “ That place in the Treasury just vacant, and the Murillo is yours. ” — “ For yourself ? — I am charmed, ” cried Sir Robert. “ No, ’tis for a friend of your own, who’s in want of it. ” — “ Oh, that alters the case : I’ve so many friends troubled with the same sort of want. ” — “ Yes, but the Murillo is *genuine*, — pray what are the friends ? ” Out laughed Sir Robert, “ There’s no resisting you and the Murillo together ! There’s the appointment. And now, since your Lordship has bought me, I must insist upon buying your Lordship. Fair play is a jewel. ” Then I take my grand holiday air : “ Sir Robert, ” said I, “ you’ve bought me long ago ! you’ve given us peace where we feared civil war ; and a Constitutional King instead of a despot. And if that’s not enough to buy the vote of an Englishman, believe me, Sir Robert, he’s not worth the buying. ” Then he stretched out his bluff hearty hand, and I gave it a bluff hearty shake. He got the Murillo — Hardman the place. And here stand I, the only man in all England, who can boast that he bought the Prime Minister ! Faith, you may well call me hardened : I don’t feel the least bit of remorse.

Soft. Hardman ! you got Hardman the place ?

Wil. I did not say Hardman —

Soft. You did say Hardman. But as ’tis a secret that might get you into trouble, I’ll keep it. — Yet, *Dimidium meæ*, that’s not behaving much like a monster ?

Wil. Why, it does seem betraying the Good Old Cause ; — but if there’s honour among thieves, there is among monsters ; and Hardman is in the same scrape as our-

selves—in love ;—this place may secure him the hand of the lady. But mind—he's not to know I've been meddling with his affairs. Hang it ! no one likes that. Not a word then——

Soft. Not a word. My dear Fred, I'm so glad you're not so bad as you seem. I'd half a mind to desert you ; but I have not the heart ; and I'll stick by you as long as I live !

Wil. [*aside*]. Whew ! This will never do ! Poor dear little fellow ! I'm sorry to lose him ; but my word's passed to Barbara ; and 'tis all for his good. [*Aloud.*] As long as you live ? Alas ! that reminds me of your little affair. I'm to be your second, you know.

Soft. Second !—affair !

Wil. With that fierce Colonel Flint. I warned you against him ; but you have such a deuce of a spirit. Don't you remember ?

Soft. No ; why, what was it all about ?

Wil. Let me see—oh, Flint said something insolent about Mistress Barbara.

Soft. He did ?—Ruffian !

Wil. So—you called him out ! But if you'll empower me in your name to retract and apologize——

Soft. Not a bit of it. Insolent to Barbara ! *Dimidium mee.* I'd fight him if he were the first swordsman in England.

Wil. Why, that's just what he is !

Soft. Don't care ; I'm his man—though a dead one.

Wil. [*Aside.* Hang it—he's as brave as myself, on that side of his character. I must turn to another.] No, Soft-head, that was not the cause of the quarrel—said it to rouse you, as you seemed rather low. The fact is that it was a jest on yourself, that you took up rather warmly..

Soft. Was that all—only myself ?

Wil. No larger subject ; and Flint is *such* a good fencer !

Soft. My dear Fred ; I retract, I apologize ; I despise duelling—absurd and unchristianlike.

Wil. Leave all to me. Dismiss the subject. I'll settle it ; only, Softhead, you see our set has very stiff rules on such matters. And if you apologize to a bravo like Flint ; nay, if you don't actually, cheerfully, rapturously fight him—though sure to be killed—I fear you must resign all ideas of high life !

Soft. *Dimidium meæ*, but low life is better than no life at all !

Wil. There's no denying that proposition. It will console you to think that Mr. Easy's kind side is Cheapside. And you may get upon one, if you return to the other.

Soft. I was thinking so, when you found me—*thinking [hesitatingly]*—But to leave you——

Wil. Oh, not yet ! Retire at least with *éclat*. Share with me one grand, crowning, last, daring, and desperate adventure.

Soft. Deadman's Lane again, I suppose ? I thank you for nothing. Fred, I have long been your faithful follower. [*With emotion.*] Now, my Lord, I'm your humble servant.* [*Aside.* Barbara will comfort me. She's perhaps at Sir Geoffrey's.] [*Exit.*]

Wil. Well ! his love will repay him, and the City of London will present me with her freedom, in a gold box for restoring her prodigal son to her Metropolitan bosom.

* A play upon words plagiarised from Farquhar. The reader must regret that the author had not the courage to plagiarise more from Farquhar.

Deadman's Lane—that was an adventure, indeed. Lucy's mother still living—implores me to get her the sight of her child. Will Lucy believe me? Will——

Enter SMART.

—Ha, Smart? Well — Well? — You — baffled Sir Geoffrey?

Smart. He was out.

Wil. And you gave the young lady my letter?

Smart. Hist! my Lord, it so affected her—that—here she comes. *[Exit SMART.]*

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Oh, my Lord, is this true? Can it be? A mother lives! Do you wonder that I forget all else?—that I am here—and with but one prayer, lead me to that mother! She says, too, she has been slandered—blesses me—that my heart defended her, but—but—this is no snare—you do not deceive me?

Wil. Deceive you! Oh, Lucy—I have a sister myself at the hearth of my father.

Lucy. Forgive me—lead on—quick, quick—oh, mother, mother! *[Exeunt LUCY and WILMOT.]*

ACT V.—SCENE I.

Old Mill near the Thames.

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. The despatch to the Pretender [*opening it*]. Ho ! Wilmot is in my power ; here ends his rivalry. The Duke's life, too, in exchange for the Memoir ? No ! Fear is not his weak point ; but how can this haughtiest of men ever yield such memorials ? Even admit the base lie of his brother ? Still her story has that which may touch him. Since I have seen her, I feel sure of her innocence. The Duke comes ; now all depends on my chance to hit the right side of a character.

Enter DUKE OF MIDDLESEX.

Duke. Lord Loftus not here yet ! Strange !

Hard. My Lord Duke—forgive this intrusion !

Duke. T'other man I met at Lord Wilmot's. Sir, your servant ; I'm somewhat in haste.

Hard. Still I presume to delay your Grace ; for it is on a question of honour !

Duke. Honour ! that goes before all ! Sir, my time is your own.

Hard. Your Grace is the head of a house, whose fame is a part of our history ; it is therefore that I speak to you boldly, since it may be that wrongs were inflicted by one of its members——

Duke. How, sir !

Hard. Assured that if so (and should it be still in your power), your Grace will frankly repair them, as a duty you took with the ermine and coronet.

Duke. You speak well, sir.—[*Aside.* Very much like a gentleman !]

Hard. Your Grace had a brother, Lord Henry de Mowbray.

Duke. Ah ! Sir, to the point.

Hard. At once, my Lord Duke. Many years ago a duel took place between Lord Henry and Sir Geoffrey Morland—your Grace knows the cause.

Duke. Hem ! yes ; a lady—who—who——

Hard. Was banished her husband's home, and her infant's cradle, on account of suspicions based, my Lord Duke, on — what your Grace cannot wonder that the husband believed—the word of a Mowbray !

Duke. [*Aside.* Villain !] But what became of the husband, never since heard of ? He——

Hard. Fled abroad from men's tongues, and dishonour. He did not return to his native land, till he had changed for another the name that a Mowbray had blighted. Unhappy man ! he lives still.

Duke. And the lady—the lady——

Hard. Before the duel, had gone to the house of her father, who was forced that very day to fly the country. His life was in danger.

Duke. How ?

Hard. He was loyal to the Stuarts, and—a Plot was discovered.

Duke. Brave, noble gentleman ! Go on, sir.

Hard. Her other ties wrenched from her, his daughter went with him into exile—his stay, his hope, his all. His

lands were confiscated. She was high-born : she worked for a father's bread. Conceive yourself, my Lord Duke, in the place of that father—loyal and penniless ; noble ; proscribed ; dependent on the toils of a daughter ; and that daughter's name sullied by——

Duke. A word ?——

Hard. From the son of that house to which all the chivalry of England looked for example.

Duke. [*Aside.* Oh, Heaven ; can my glory thus be turned to my shame ?] But they said she had died, sir.

Hard. When her father had gone to the grave, she herself spread or sanctioned that rumour—for she resolved to die to the world. She entered a convent, prepared to take the noviciate—when she suddenly learned that a person had been inquiring for her at Paris, who stated that Lord Henry de Mowbray had left behind him a Memoir——

Duke. Ah !

Hard. Which acquits her. She learned, too, the clue to her husband—resolved to come hither—arrived six days since. No proof of her innocence save those for which I now appeal to your Grace !

Duke. O pride, be my succour ! [*Haughtily.*] Appeal to me, sir, and wherefore ?

Hard. The sole evidence alleged against this lady are the fact of a letter sent from herself to Lord Henry, and the boast of a man now no more. She asserts that that letter would establish her innocence. She believes that, on his deathbed, your brother retracted his boast ; and that the Memoir he left will attest to its falsehood.

Duke. Asserts—believes—go on—go on.

Hard. No, my Lord Duke, I have done. I know that

that letter, that Memoir exist ; that they are now in your hands. If her assertion be false—if they prove not her innocence—a word, nay, a sign, from the chief of a house so renowned for its honour, suffices. I take my leave, and condemn her. But if her story be true, you have heard the last chance of a wife and a mother to be restored to the husband she loves and forgives, to the child who has grown into womanhood remote from her care ; and these blessings I pledged her my faith to obtain, if that letter, that Memoir, should prove that the boast was——

Duke. A lie, sir, a lie, a black lie !—the coward's worst crime—a lie on the fair name of a woman ! Sir, this heat, perhaps, is unseemly ; thus to brand my own brother ! But if we, the peers of England, and the representatives of her gentlemen, can hear, can think, of vile things done, whoever the doer, with calm pulse and cold heart—perish our titles ; where would be the use of a Duke ?

Hard. [*aside*]. A very bright side of his character.

Duke. Sir, you are right. The Memoir you speak of is in my hands ; and with it, Lady Morland's own letter. Much in that Memoir relates to myself ; and so galls all the pride I am said to possess, that not ten minutes since methought I had rather my duchy were forfeit than have exposed its contents to the pity or laugh of a stranger. I think no more of myself. A woman has appealed for her name to mine honour as a man. Now, sir, your commands ?

Hard. No passage is needed, save that which acquits Lady Morland. Let the memoir still rest in your hands. Condescend but to bring it forthwith to my house ; and may I hope that my Lord Loftus may accompany you—there is an affair of moment on which I would speak to you both.

Duke. Your address, sir ; I will but return home for the documents, and proceed at once to your house. Hurry not ; I will wait. Allow me to take your hand, sir. You know how to speak to the heart of a gentleman.

[*Exit.*]

Hard. [*aside*]. Yet how ignorant we are of men's hearts till we see them lit up by a passion ! This noble has made what is honour so clear to my eyes. Let me pause—let me think—let me choose ! I feel as if I stood at the crisis of life.

Enter SOTHEAD.

Soft. What have I seen !—Where go ?—Whom consult ? Oh, Mr. Hardman ! You're a friend of Lord Wilmot's, of Sir Geoffrey's, of Lucy's ?

Hard. Speak—quick—to the purpose.

Soft. On my way to Sir Geoffrey's, I passed by a house of the most villanous character. I dare not say how Wilmot himself has described it. [*Earnestly.*] Oh, sir, you know Wilmot ! you know his sentiments on marriage. I saw Wilmot and Lucy Thornsides enter that infamous house !—Deadman's Lane !

Hard. [*aside*]. Deadman's Lane ? He takes her to the arms of her mother ! forestalls my own plan, will reap my reward. Have I schemed, then, for him ! No, by yon heavens !

Soft. I ran on to Sir Geoffrey's—he was out.

Hard. [*who has been writing in his tablets, tears out a page*]. Take this to Justice Kite's, hard by : he will send two special officers, placed at the door, Deadman's Lane, to wait my instructions. They must go instantly—arrive as soon as myself. Then hasten to Mr. Easy's : Sir Geof-

frey is there. Break your news with precaution, and bring him straight to that house. Leave the rest to my care. Away with you ; quick.

Soft. I know he will kill me ! But I'm right. And when I'm right,—*Dimidium mee !* [*Exit.*]

Hard. Ho ! ho ! It is war ! My choice is made. I am armed at all points, and strike for the victory. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Apartment in the house, Deadman's Lane, Crown and Portcullis, very old-fashioned and sombre, faded tapestry on the walls, high mantel-piece, with deep ingles ; furniture rude and simple ; general air of the room not mean, but forlorn, as of that in some house neglected and little inhabited since the days of Elizabeth ; the tapestry, drawn aside at the back, shows a door into an inner room—LUCY and her mother.—WILMOT seated.

Lady Thorn. And you believe me. Dear child—this indeed is happiness.—Ah ! if your cruel father—

Lucy. Hush—he will believe you, too.

Lady Thorn. No ; I could not venture into his presence, without the proof that he had wronged me.

Wil. Oh, that I had known before what interest you had in this Memoir !—how can I recover it from the Duke !—

Lucy. You will—you must—dear—dear Lord Wilmot—you have restored me to my mother ; restore my mother to her home.

Wil. Ah—and this hand—would you withdraw it then ?

Lucy. Never from him who reunites my parents.

Lady Thorn. Ha !—a voice without—steps !

Wil. If it should be Sir Geoffrey—in some rash violence he might—retire—quick—quick.

[*Exeunt LADY THORNSIDE and LUCY in the inner room.*]

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. Alone ! Where is Lucy, my lord ?

Wil. In the next room with——

Hard. Her mother ?

Wil. What ! you know ?

Hard. I know that between us two there is a strife, and I am come to decide it ; you love Lucy Thornsides.

Wil. Well ! I told you so.

Hard. You told it, my Lord, to a rival. Ay, smile. You have wealth, rank, fashion, and wit ; I have none of these, and I need them not. But I say to you—that ere the hand on this dial moves to that near point in time, your love will be hopeless and your suit be withdrawn.

Wil. The man's mad. Unless sir, you wish me to believe that my life hangs on your sword, I cannot quite comprehend why my love should go by your watch.

Hard. I command you, Lord Wilmot, to change this tone of levity : I command it in the name of a life which, I think, you prize more than your own ; a life that is now in my hands. You told me to sound your father. I have not done so—I have detected——

Wil. Detected ! Hold, sir ! that word implies crime.

Hard. Ay, the crime of the great. History calls it ZEAL. Law styles it HIGH TREASON.

Wil. What do I hear? Heavens!—my father! Sir, your word is no proof?

Hard. But *this* is! [*Producing the Requisition to the Pretender.*] 'Tis high treason, conspiring to levy arms against the King on the throne—here called the Usurper. High treason to promise to greet with banner and trumpet a pretender—here called James the Third. Such is the purport of the paper I hold—and here is the name of your father.

Wil. [*Aside*]. Both are armed and alone.

[*Locks the outer door by which he is standing.*]

Hard. [*Aside*]. So, I guess his intention. [*Opens the window and looks out.*] Good, the officers are come.

Wil. What the law calls high-treason I know not; what the honest call treason I know. Traitor, thou who hast used the confidence of a son against the life of a father, thou shalt not quit these walls with that life in thy grasp—yield the proof thou hast plundered or forged.

[*Seizes him.*]

Hard. 'St! the officers of justice are below; loose thine hold, or the life thou demandest falls from these hands into theirs!

Wil. [*recoiling*]. Foiled! Foiled! How act! what do? And thy son set yon bloodhound on thy track, O my father! Sir, you say you are my rival; I guess the terms you now come to impose!

Hard. I impose no terms. What needs the demand? Have you an option? I think better of you. We both love the same woman; I have loved her a year, you a week; you have her father's dislike, I his consent. One must yield—why should I? Rude son of the people though I be, why must I be thrust from the sunshine

because you cross my path as the fair and the high-born ? What have I owed to your order or you ?

Wil. To me, sir ? Well, if to me you owed some slight favour, I should scorn at this moment to speak it.

Hard. I owe favour, the slightest to no man ; 'tis my boast. Listen still, I schemed to save your father, not to injure. Had you rather this scroll had fallen into the hands of a spy ? And now, if I place it in yours—save your name from attainder, your fortunes from confiscation, your father from the axe of the headsman—why should I ask terms ? Would it be possible for you to say, “ Sir, I thank you ; and in return I would do my best to rob your life of the woman you love, and whom I have just known a week ? ” Could you, peer's son, and gentleman, thus reply,—when, if I know aught of this grand people of England, not a mechanic who walks thro' yon streets, from the loom to the hovel, but what would cry “ Shame ! ” on such answer ?

Wil. Sir, I cannot argue with, I cannot rival the man who has my father's life at his will, whether to offer it as a barter, or to yield it as a boon. Either way, rivalry between us is henceforth impossible. Fear mine no more ! Give me the scroll—I depart.

Hard. [*Aside.* His manliness moves me !] Nay let me pray your permission to give it myself to your father, and with such words as will save him, and others whose names are hereto attached, from such perilous hazards in future.

Wil. In this too I fear that you leave me no choice ; I must trust as I may to your honour ! but heed well if——

Hard. Menace not ; you doubt, then, my honour ?

Wil. [*with suppressed passion*]. Plainly, I do ; our characters differ. I had held myself dishonoured for ever if our positions had been reversed,—if I had taken such confidence as was placed in you,—concealed the rivalry,—prepared the scheme,—timed the moment,—forced the condition in the guise of benefit. No, sir, no ; that may be talent, it is not honour.

Hard. [*Aside.* This stings ! scornful fool that he is, not to see that I was half relenting. And now I feel but the foe ! How sting again ? I will summon him back to witness himself my triumph.] Stay, my Lord ! [*Writing at the table.*] You doubt that I should yield up the document to your father ? Bring him hither at once ! He is now at my house with the Duke of Middlesex ; pray them both to come here, and give this note to the Duke. [*With a smile.*] You will do it, my Lord.

Wil. Ay, indeed,—and when my father is safe, I will try to think that I wronged you. [*Aside.* And not one parting word to—to—S'death—I am unmanned. Show such emotion to him—No, no !—And if I cannot watch over that gentle life, why the angels will !] I—I go, sir,—fulfil the compact ; I have paid the price. [*Exit.*

Hard. He loves her more than I thought for. But she ? Does she love him ? [*Goes to the door.*] Mistress Lucy ! [*Leads forth LUCY.*

Lucy. Lord Wilmot gone !

Hard. Nay, speak not of him. If ever he hoped that your father could have overcome a repugnance to his suit he is now compelled to resign that hope, and for ever [*LUCY turns aside, and weeps quietly.*] Let us speak of your parents—your mother——

Lucy. Oh, yes—my dear mother—I so love her already.

Hard. You have heard her tale ! Would you restore her, no blot on her name, to the hearth of your father ?

Lucy. Speak !—speak !—can it be so ?

Hard. If it cost you some sacrifice ?

Lucy. Life has none for an object thus holy.

Hard. Hear, and decide. It is the wish of your father that I should ask for this hand——

Lucy. No !—no !

Hard. Is the sacrifice so hard ? Wait and hear the atonement. You come from the stolen embrace of a mother ; I will make that mother the pride of your home. You have yearned for the love of a father ; I will break down the wall between yourself and his heart—I will dispel all the clouds that have darkened his life.

Lucy. You will—you will ! O blessings upon you !

Hard. Those blessings this hand can confer !

Lucy. But—but—the heart—the heart—*that* does *not* go with the hand.

Hard. Later, it will. I only pray for a trial. I ask but to conquer that heart, not to break it. Your father will soon be here—every moment I expect him. He comes in the full force of suspicion—deeming you lured here by Wilmot—fearing (pardon the vile word) your dishonour. How explain ? You cannot speak of your mother till I first prove her guiltless. Could they meet till I do, words would pass that would make even union hereafter too bitter to her pride as a woman. Give me the power at once to destroy suspicion, remove fear, delay other explanations. Let me speak—let me act as your betrothed, your accepted. Hark ! voices below—your father comes !

—I have no time to plead ; excuse what is harsh—seems ungenerous——

Sir Geof. [*without*]. Out of my way !—loose my sword !

Lucy. Oh save my mother !—Let him not see my mother.

Hard. Grant me this trial—pledge this hand now—retract hereafter if you will. Your mother's name—your parents' reunion ! Ay or no !—will you pledge it ?

Lucy. Can you doubt their child's answer ? I pledge it !

Enter SIR GEOFFREY, *struggling from* EASY, SOFTHEAD, BARBARA.

Sir Geof. Where is he ? where is this villain ? let me get at him ! What, what, gone ? [*Falling on* HARDMAN'S *breast.*] Oh Hardman ! You came, you came ! I dare not look at her yet. *Is she saved ?*

Hard. Your daughter is innocent in thought as in deed—I speak in the name of the rights she has given me ; you permitted me to ask for her hand ; and here she has pledged it !

Sir Geof. O my child ! my child ! I never called you that name before. Did I ? Hush ! I know now that thou art my child ; know it by my anguish ; know it by my joy. Who could wring from me tears like these, but a child !

Easy. But how is it all, Mr. Hardman ? you know everything ! That fool Softhead, with his cock-and-bull story, frightened us out of our wits.

Soft. That's the thanks I get ! How is it all, Mr. Hardman ?

Sir Geof. Ugh, what so clear ? He came here—he saved her ! My child was grateful. Approach, Hardman, near, near. Forgive me, if your childhood was

lonely ; forgive me, if you seemed so unfriended. Your father made me promise that you should not know the temptations that he thought had corrupted himself,—should not know of my favours, to be galled by what he called my suspicions,—should not feel the yoke of dependence ;—should believe that you forced your own way through the world—till it was made. Now it is so. Ah, not in vain did I pardon him his wrongs against me ; not in vain fulfil that sad promise which gave a smile to his lips in dying ; not in vain have I bestowed benefits on you. You have saved—I know it—I feel it ; saved from infamy—my child.

Lucy. Hush, sir, hush !

[*Throws herself into BARBARA'S arms.*

Hard. My father ? Benefits ? You smile, Mr. Easy. What means he ? No man on this earth ever bestowed benefits on me !

Easy. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Nay, excuse me ; but when I think that that's said by a clever fellow like you—ha ! ha !—the jest is too good ; as if any one ever drove a coach through this world but what some other one built the carriage, or harnessed the horses ! Why, who gave you the education that helped to make you what you are ? Who silyly paid Tonson, the publisher, to bring out the work that first raised you into notice ? Who sent you the broker with the tale of the South-Sea Scheme ? From whose purse came the sum that bought your annuity ? Whose land does the annuity burthen ? Who told Fleece'em, the boroughmonger, to offer you a seat in Parliament ? Who paid for the election that did not cost you a shilling ?—who, but my suspicious, ill-tempered, good-hearted friend there ? And you are the son of his

foster-brother, the man who first wronged and betrayed him !

Soft. And this is the gentleman who knows everybody and everything ? Did not even know his own father ! La ! why he's been quite a take-in ! Ha ! ha !

Easy. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Hard. And all the while I thought I was standing apart from others, — needing none ; served by none ; mastering men ; moulding them,—the men whom my father had wronged went before me with noiseless beneficence, and opened my path through the mountain I fancied this right hand had hewn !

Sir Geof. Tut ! I did but level the ground ; till you were strong eno' to rise of yourself ; *I* did not give you the post that you named with so manly a pride ; *I* did not raise you to the councils of your country as the "Equal of All !"

Soft. No ! for that you'll thank Fred. He bribed the Prime Minister with his favourite Murillo. He said you wanted the post to win the lady you loved. *Dimidium mei*,—I think you might have told him what lady it was.

Hard. So ! Wilmot !—It needed but this !

Easy. Pooh, Mr. Softhead ! Sir Geoffrey would never consent to a lord. Quite right. Practical, steady fellow is Mr. Hardman ; and as to his father, a disreputable connection—quite right not to know him ! All you want, Geoffrey, is to secure Lucy's happiness.

Sir Geof. All ! That, now, is his charge.

Hard. I accept it. But first I secure yours, O my benefactor ! This house, in which you feared to meet infamy, is the home of sorrow and virtue ; the home of a woman unsullied, but slandered,—of her who, loving you

still, followed your footsteps ; watched you night and day from yon windows ; sent you those flowers, the tokens of innocence and youth ; in romance, it is true—the romance only known to a woman—the romance only known to the pure ! Lord Wilmot is guiltless ! He led your child to the arms of a mother !

Sir Geof. Silence him !—silence him !—'tis a snare ! I retract ! He shall not have this girl ! *Her* house ? Do I breathe the same air as the woman so loved and so faithless ?

Lucy. Pity, for my mother !—No, no ; justice for her ! Pity for yourself and for me !

Sir Geof. Come away, or you shall not be my child, I'll disown you. That man speaks——

Enter WILMOT, DUKE, and LORD LOFTUS.

Hard. I speak, and I prove—[*To the DUKE*]*—*The Memoirs—[*Glancing over them.*] Here is the very letter that the menial informed you your wife sent to Lord Henry. Read it ; and judge if such scorn would not goad such a man to revenge. What revenge could he wield ? Why, a boast !

Sir Geof. [*reading*]. The date of the very day that he boasted. Ha ! brave words ! proud heart ! I suspect !—I suspect !

Hard. Lord Henry's confession ! It was writ on his deathbed.

Lord Lof. 'Tis his hand. I attest it.

Duke. I, too, John, Duke of Middlesex.

Sir Geof. [*who has been reading the confession*]. Heaven forgive me ! Can *she* ? The flowers ; the figures ; the—— How blind I've been ! Where is she ? where

is she? You said she was here! [LADY THORNSIDE *appears at the door.*] Ellinor! Ellinor! to my arms—to my heart—O my wife! Pardon! Pardon!

Lady Thorn. Nay, all was forgiven when I once more embraced our child.

Hard. [to LOFTUS and DUKE]. My Lords, destroy this Requisition! When you signed it, you doubtless believed that the Prince you would serve was of the Church of your Protestant fathers? You are safe evermore; for your honour is freed. The Prince has retired to Rome, and abjured your faith. I will convince you of this later.

[DUKE and SOTHEAD continue to shun each other with mutual apprehension.]

Easy [to WILMOT]. Glad to find you are not so bad as you seemed, my Lord; and now that Lucy is engaged to Mr. Hardman——

Wil. Engaged already! [*Aside.* So! he asked me here to insult me with his triumph!] Well!

Hard. Lucy, your parents are united—my promise fulfilled; permit me—[*Takes her hand.*] Sir Geoffrey, the son of him who so wronged you, and whose wrongs you pardoned, now reminds you, that he is entrusted with the charge to ensure the happiness of your child! Behold the man of her choice, and take from his presence your own cure of distrust. With his faults on the surface, and with no fault that is worse than that of concealing his virtues;—Here she loves and is loved! And thus I discharge the trust, and ensure the happiness!

[*Placing her hand in WILMOT'S.*]

Sir Geof. How?

Lady Thorn. It is true—do you not read in her blush the secret of her heart?

Wil. How can I accept at the price of——

Hard. Hush ! For the third time to-day, you have but one option. You cannot affect to be generous to me at the cost of a heart all your own. Take your right. Come, my Lord, lest I tell all the world how you bribed the Prime Minister.

Soft. [*who has taken EASY aside*]. But, indeed, Mr. Easy, I reform ; I repent. Mr. Hardman will have a bride in the country—let me have a bride in the city. After all, I was not such a very bad monster.

Easy. Pooh ! Won't hear of it ! Want to marry only just to mimic my Lord.

Bar. Dear Lord Wilmot ; *do* say a good word for us.

Easy. No, sir ; no ! Your head's been turned by a lord.

Wil. Not the first man whose head has been turned by a lord, with the help of the Duke of Burgundy—eh, Mr. Easy ? I'll just appeal to Sir Geoffrey.

Easy. No—no—hold your tongue, my Lord.

Wil. And you insisted upon giving your daughter to Mr. Softhead ; forced her upon him.

Easy. I—never !—When ?

Wil. Last night, when you were chaired member for the City of London. I'll just explain the case to Sir Geoffrey——

Easy. Confound it—hold—hold !—You like this young reprobate, Barbara ?

Bar. Dear papa, his health is so delicate ! I should like to take care of him.

Easy. There, go, and take care of each other. Ha ! ha ! I suppose it is all for the best.

[DUKE takes forth, and puts on, his spectacles; examines SOTHEAD curiously—is convinced that he is human, approaches, and offers his hand, which SOTHEAD, emboldened by BARBARA, though not without misgivings, accepts.

A great deal of dry stuff, called philosophy, is written about life. But the grand thing is to take it coolly, and have a good-humoured indulgence——

Wil. For the force of example, Mr. Easy!

Soft. Ha! ha! ha!

Wil. For the follies of fashion, and the crimes of monsters like myself, and that terrible Softhead!

Sir Geof. Ha! ha!

Hard. You see, my dear Wilmot, many sides to a character!

Wil. Plague on it, yes! But get at them all, and we're not so bad as we seem——

Soft. No, Fred, not quite so bad!

Wil. Taking us as we stand—**ALTOGETHER!**

“DAVID FALLEN IS DEAD!”

OR,

A KEY TO THE PLAY.

(AN AFTER-SCENE, BY WAY OF AN EPILOGUE.)

(Intended to have been spoken by the Original Amateur Performers.)

SCENE.

WILMOT'S Apartment.—WILMOT, SIR GEOFFREY, SOTHEAD, EASY,
and HARDMAN, seated at a Table. Wine, Fruits, &c.

Wil. Pass the wine—what's the news?

Easy. Funds have risen to-day.

Sir Geof. I suspect it will rain.

Easy. Well, I've got in my hay.

Hard. DAVID FALLEN IS DEAD!

Omnes. DAVID FALLEN!

Wil. Poor fellow!

Sir Geof. I should like to have seen him!

Soft. I saw him! So yellow!

Hard. Your annuity killed him!

Wil. How—how? to the point.

Hard. By the shock on his nerves—at the sight of a joint.

A very great genius——

Easy. I own—now he's dead,

That a writer more charming——

Wil. Was never worse fed!

Hard. His country was grateful——

Soft. [*surprised*]. He looked very shabby !

Hard. His bones——

Soft. You might count them !——

Hard. Repose in the Abbey !

Soft. [*after a stare of astonishment*]. So THAT is the way
that a country is grateful !

Ere his nerves grew so weak,—if she'd sent him a plateful.

Easy [*hastily producing a long paper*]. MY TAXES !
Your notions are perfectly hateful !

[*Pause.—Evident feeling that there's no getting over MR.
EASY'S paper.*]

Wil. Pope's epigram stung him.

Hard. Yes, Pope has a sting.

Wil. But who writes the epitaph ?

Hard. Pope : a sweet thing !

Wil. 'Gad, if I were an author, I'd rather, instead,
Have the epitaph living—the epigram dead.

If Pope had but just reconsidered that matter,

Poor David——

Soft. Had gone to the Abbey much fatter !

Easy. He was rather a scamp !

Wil. Put yourself in his place.

Easy [*horror-struck*]. Heaven forbid !

Hard. Let us deem him the Last of a Race !

Sir Geof. But the race that succeeds may have little
more pelf.

Hard. Ay ; and trials as sharp. I'm an author myself.
But the remedy ? Wherefore should authors not build——

Easy. An alms-house ?

Hard. No, merchant, their own noble guild !
Some fortress for youth in the battle for fame ;

Some shelter that Age is not humbled to claim ;
Some roof from the storm for the Pilgrim of Knowledge ;—

Wil. Not unlike what our ancestors meant by—a College;
Where teacher and student alike the subscriber,
Untaxing the Patron,—

Easy. The State——

Hard. Or the briber,—

Wil. The son of proud Learning shall knock at the door
And cry *This** is rich, and not whine *That†* is poor.

Hard. Oh right ! For these men govern earth from
their graves—

Shall the dead be as kings, and the living as slaves !

Easy. It is all their own fault—they so slave one another ;
Not a son of proud Learning but knocks—down his brother !

Wil. Yes! other vocations, from Thames to the Border,
Have some *esprit de corps*, and some pride in their order ;
Lawyers, soldiers, and doctors, if quarrels do pass,
Still soften their spite from respect to their class ;
Why should authors be spitting and scratching like tabbies,
To leave but dry bones——

Soft. For those grateful cold Abbeys !

Hard. Worst side of their character !

Wil. True to the letter.
Are their sides, then, so fat, we can't hit on a better?

Hard. Why—the sticks in the fable!—our Guild be the tether.

Wil. Ay: the thorns are rubbed off when the sticks
cling together.

Soft. [musingly]. I could be—yes—I could be a Pilgrim of Knowledge,

If you'd change Deadman's Lane to a snug little College.

* The head.

† The pocket.

Sir Geof. Ugh ! stuff !—it takes money a College to found.

Easy. I will head the subscription myself—with a pound.

Hard. Quite enough from a friend : for we authors should feel

We must put our own shoulders like men to the wheel.

Be thrifty when thriving—take heed of the morrow,—

Easy. And not get in debt——

Sir Geof. Where the deuce could they borrow ?

Hard. Let us think of a scheme.

Easy. He is always so knowing.

Wil. A scheme ! I have got one ; the wheel's set a-going !

A play from one author.

Hard. With authors for actors.—

Wil. And some benefit nights,——

Both. For the world's benefactors.

Sir Geof. Who'll give you the play ? it will not be worth giving,

Authors now are so bad ; always are while they're living !

Easy. Ah ! if David Fallen, great genius, were here——

Omnes. Great genius !

Hard. A man whom all time shall revere !

Soft. [*impatiently*]. But he's dead.

Omnes [*lugubriously*]. He is dead !

Easy. The true Classical School, sir !

Ah ! could he come back !

Wil. He'll not be such a fool, sir.

[*Taking HARDMAN aside, whispers.*

We know of an author.

Hard. [*doubtfully*]. Ye—s—s, David was brighter.

Omnes. But he's dead.

Hard. This might do—as a live sort of writer.

Easy. Alive ! that looks bad.

Soft. Must we take a live man ?

Wil. To oblige us he'll be, sir,—as dead as he can !

Soft. Alive ; and *will* write, sir ?

Hard. With pleasure, sir.

Soft. PLEASURE !

Hard. With less than your wit, he has more than your leisure.

Coquets with the Muse——

Sir Geof. Lucky dog to afford her !

Wil. Can we get his good side ?

Hard. Yes, he's proud of his order.

Wil. Then he'll do !

Sir Geof. As for wit—he has books on his shelves.

Hard. Now the actors ?

Wil. By Jove, we will act it ourselves.

[*Omnes, at first surprised into enthusiasm, succeeded by great consternation.*]

Sir Geof. Ugh, not I !

Soft. Lord ha' mercy !

Easy. A plain, sober, steady—

Wil. I'll appeal to Sir Geoffrey. There's one caught already !

This suspicious old knight ; to his blind side, direct us.

Hard. Your part is to act——

Wil. True ; and his to suspect us.

I rely upon you.

Hard. [*looking at his watch*]. Me ! I have not a minute !

Wil. If the Play has a plot, he is sure to be in it.

Come, Softhead !

Soft. I won't. I'll go home to my mother.

Wil. Pooh ! monsters like us always help one another.

Sir Geof. I suspect you will act.

Soft. Well, I've this consolation—

Still to imitate one——

Hard. Who defies imitation.

Wil. Let the public but favour the plan we have hit on,
And we'll chair through all London,—our Family Briton.

Sir Geof. What ?—what ? Look at Easy ! He's drunk,
or I dream——

Easy [*rising*]. The toast of the evening—SUCCESS TO
THE SCHEME !

THE END.

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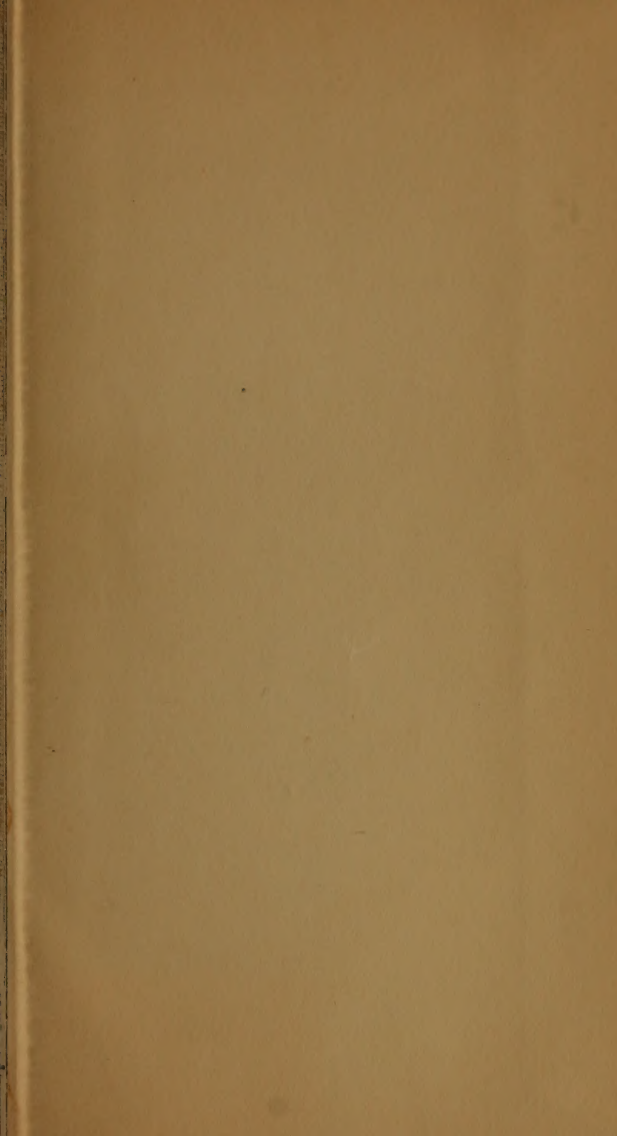
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